OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.



(i.) Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., ex-M.P., in THE SPEAKER.—"The superficial observer might, from the title of this book, suppose that it was a personal attack on Lord Curzon. But this would be a mistake. The book is an attack, not on an individual, but upon a system; it is a condemnation of the extravagance, the oppressiveness, the obscurantism, the corruption and the general folly of 'Imperialism.' The writer's statements are concise, his style bright and racy, and those who do not desire to live in a fool's paradise should read his vigorous exposition of the methods, by which the fabric of our Indian Empire is being undermined."

(ii.) THE BOOK OF THE MONTH (July) by Mr. W. T. Stead in the REVIEW OF REVIEWS.—"This book is a dynamite bomb which, if it exploded in the right place, might burst the Indian Empire as it now is into irremediable ruin. . . . If what he says is true, instead of being proud of our Indian Empire we ought to cover our heads with shame when we hear it named. Instead of being our glory it is our shame."

(iii.) THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW.—"There is no lack of knowledge in this uncompromising indictment. . . . Whether we agree with the author or not, his book is worth reading as an exposition of an honest though unpopular view of Indian administration, written by one who has given the greater part of his life to the work."

(iv.) THE ATHENÆUM.—"A healthy counterstroke to official optimism. . . . The *whole* book should be read by all interested in Indian administration."

(v.) MORNING POST.—"A rattling attack on the self-confident young Statesman."

(vi.) DAILY NEWS.—"This book contains certainly very grave charges."

(vii.) VANITY FAIR.—"On the question of taxation, the writer states a case ably and strongly."

(viii.) LIVERPOOL POST.—"A trenchant yet courteous criticism."

(ix.) LIBERTY REVIEW.—"The array of facts and the opinions of distinguished statesmen and administrators, collected in the book, forcibly arrest one's attention."

(x.) THE PRESBYTERIAN.—"The arraignment is thorough and absolute."

(xi.) REYNOLDS' NEWSPAPER.—"A very powerful indictment of the showy, but ineffective, Government of India. . . . Unanswerable."

(xii.) LANCASHIRE POST.—"High taxation is a greater source of danger. . . . Impoverishment."

(xiii.) THE NEW AGE.—"An amount of explosive force that can hardly fail to wake up some readers."

(xiv.) MORNING ADVERTISER.—"Deserves to be read carefully. It is written in a moderate, reasonable way."

(xv.) PRIMITIVE METHODIST.—"A book like the one before us is deserving of a warm welcome."

(xvi.) NEW INDIA (Calcutta).—"That these indictments are essentially true must be admitted by every impartial judge of the present Indian administration."

THE FAILURE OF LORD CURZON

THE FAILURE OF LORD CURZON

A STUDY IN "IMPERIALISM"

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EARL OF ROSEBERY

BY

C. J. O'DONNELL
("TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS IN INDIA")

THIRD EDITION

'God give us men. A time like this demands
Great hearts, strong minds, true faith and willing hands:
Men, whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men, whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men, who possess opinions and a will;
Men, who have honour, men who will not lie."
—Oliver Wendell Holmes



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PATERNOSTER SQUARE · 1903



PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE Report of the War Commission has been a cruel disillusionment. Yet four years ago were we not blessed with a Cabinet of All the Talents? A distinguished Irishman in vain warned the English people of the true position of affairs in South Africa. Can an unknown writer hope to obtain more success when drawing attention to failure in India? Sir William Butler was condemned, as he himself bluntly puts it, as "a fool or a knave." The "Imperialist" Press did not hesitate to attribute disloyalty to the far-sighted general. I have dropped anonymity because the same intelligent journals can see in it only a cloak for personal feeling.

The recent extension of Lord Curzon's term of office has been acclaimed by nearly the whole London Press, Liberal as well as Conservative, as the fit reward of great services done for the State. The Press of India takes a very different view. The *Pioneer* is undoubtedly the premier journal of the English race in India, and finds it necessary to point out that Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty has been rather an

undistinguished period, and that, although accompanied by much and multiform display, it will not bear comparison with the administrations that have gone before it.

"Loyalty to predecessors equally devoted to the country," it wrote a few weeks ago (August 14, 1903), "should prevent people in India from acquiescing in the undiscriminating adulation that the English Press is disposed to pour on the present ruler of India, to their detriment. In point of fact if the Viceroyalty is looked at dispassionately it would seem to be *a time of manifold stir indeed but of no achievements* that we can put in the first rank of importance. There is no great historical landmark like the acquisition of Burma to distinguish it. There has been nothing to compare with Lord Dufferin's handling of the Public Service question, which quietly settled a host of thorny matters upon lines that have held good for eighteen years, and which seem more and more to become part of the settled principles of the Administration. Or, again, have we seen in the last few years any idea equal in originality to the institution of the Imperial Service troops? Or has there been any measure that is likely to produce such a lasting effect upon Indian public life as Lord Lansdowne's popularisation of the Legislative Councils, the results of which may be seen growing year by year? Or has there been any crisis of late years comparable in gravity, in the discernment and decision that it demanded, and in the complete success of the remedy, to the currency situation in 1893 when it was taken in hand by the same Viceroy?"

This passage may be taken as the expression of the

views of cultured Englishmen in India. Excepting the Durbar and its theatrical surroundings, which were an abomination to Anglo-Indians, "a levelling down to Asiatic tawdriness," Lord Curzon has done little. He has, indeed, appointed commissions on education, police, irrigation, &c., but reform is still in the clouds. There have been grandiose schemes of water supply, costing some thirty millions sterling. Millions also are to be expended on great thoroughfares opening up Calcutta, and millions on police. But where is the money to come from? There has, in fact, been much eloquence and imagination, written and spoken, but "no achievements."

The opinion of native society on Lord Curzon's extension is expressed unmistakably in the *Bengali*, which is the foremost organ of its race in India, being edited by the Senior Indian Member of the Bengal Legislative Council and the most influential native politician in our Eastern Empire, the Honourable Surendranath Banerjee.

"Whilst we applaud," it wrote on August 11, 1903, "the motives and admire the enthusiasm of the Viceroy, we must be permitted to repeat the complaint which we have so often urged in these columns, viz., that His Excellency has not, so far, won by his measures or by his policy the confidence and the esteem of the Indian people. On the contrary, there is a wide-spread feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction in the country. No Viceroy was less fettered by conventionalities or was more capable of a bold initiative than Lord Curzon. But unfortunately there has been no Viceroy within living memory who within the term

of his office has created a more wide-spread feeling of disappointment. Great things were expected of His Excellency when he landed at Bombay and delivered that fine speech in reply to the address of the Corporation, the echoes of which still seem to linger in the air. . . .

"The news of the Viceroy's extension of service has indeed been received with a chorus of applause by the English Press. Lord Curzon, we know, is a past master in the art of winning journalistic applause. But the English Press is more or less under official influence in its views regarding Indian affairs, and we, who are on the spot, have no reasons to share its congratulations, unless indeed there is a distinct change of policy in the future measures of Lord Curzon's Government. . . .

"A policy of reaction is visible in many of those measures which affect the interests of Local Self-Government and the great question of the wider employment of the people in the public service. If the future is to be judged from the past—if the coming years of Lord Curzon's administration are to represent a still wider amplification of the policy of the last four years, then all that we can say is that an administration which it was confidently hoped would be the most brilliant Viceroyalty, would be writ on the pages of history as *a dismal failure and the saddest disappointment* the Indian people had ever experienced."

Vernacular newspapers in Bombay, Madras, and Upper India repeat the same regrets for the failure of a statesman, from whom much was expected, and

who has it in him to do, perhaps, great things, if he could rise to some nobler ideals than those of a prancing "Imperialism."

I have been much blamed for treating the present administration of India from so personal a standpoint, but I have been forced to adopt this line of controversy. "The undiscriminating adulation of the English Press," which the *Pioneer* justly stigmatises, has attributed everything done in India during the past four years to an individual. Moreover, I have no desire to attack the Government of India as an institution. An autocracy is the only form of administration possible in that country at the present time, but the autocrat must be level-headed, experienced, patient and strong, whilst grateful for advice. Lord Curzon has none of these qualities, though clever, even brilliant, sympathetic and just. Perhaps it may be that India needs a Viceroy with a reputation and a position already established, like Lord Dufferin or Lord Northbrook, and not a pushful, ambitious young "Imperialist" with his future to make.

My criticisms of Lord Curzon may seem querulous, but a short consideration of his action in regard to the Ninth Lancers may show that they are well founded. It was typical of his attractive as well as of his unstatesmanlike characteristics. His fierce indignation against an absolutely fiendish murder was unmixedly admirable. One feels one is dealing with a man with his heart in the right place. The greater, then, is the regret that the method of punishment adopted was unjudicial and unwise. The crime was committed at

an hour when all the troops, except a few stray drunken wanderers, were in bed asleep. Inquiry had this initial difficulty to contend with. Still, some information might have been arrived at if searching investigation had been immediately made. And here comes in the real criminality, not of the regiment, but of the commanding officers. Although the victim of the outrage lay some days in hospital dying, no adequate inquiry was attempted. Had the men responsible for this neglect been severely dealt with the majority of Englishmen in India would have applauded an act of unquestionable justice. Lord Curzon preferred an indiscriminate chastisement, which included even officers in England enjoying a brief holiday, well earned in South Africa. The sense of wrong to these war-worn men diverted sympathy from the murdered native, and at the Delhi Durbar English ladies and gentlemen most unwisely, but most patriotically, cheered a regiment with a special and recent reputation for gallant conduct on the field of battle. Many blame this "disgraceful" display of race prejudice, but it was not less natural than that the Indian Press should misunderstand the demonstration. Another faggot was added to the fire of racial feud. Justice, however well-intentioned, may, if ill-balanced, produce deplorable results.

England was never more in need of statesmen on whom she can rely. She has suffered deeply during recent years from the vagaries of "Empire-building Imperialists." An impartial Commission on Indian affairs would produce a report hardly less painful than the Blue Book, which the recent dissection of

the War Office has given birth to. If such a Commission were appointed there are scores of Englishmen of Indian experience, servants of the Crown, administrators, judges, merchants, lawyers, and journalists, who are ready and eager to give evidence.

C. J. O'DONNELL.

75, QUEEN'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.
September 15, 1903.

PS.—Lord Curzon is at the present instant passing into law—not in Calcutta but in the hole-and-corner legislature at Simla—an Official Secrets (Amendment) Act, much more stringent than anything known in England. It makes offences under it non-bailable, and alleged offenders liable to arrest without a magistrate's warrant. An extraordinary provision in it confers certain judicial powers on "the commanding officer of the nearest military station"! The native Press denounces this drumhead legislation as an attempt to terrorise it into silence on foreign affairs.

Lord Curzon is about to visit the ports on the coast of the Persian Gulf, where we have no dominion. He is simply giving Russia overt warning of what his mischievous ambition is, viz., to establish a British protectorate over southern Persia. That would be a more expensive game than the conquest of the Transvaal and more unprofitable. The Christians of Macedonia need expect little aid from St. Petersburg so long as the chief advocate of a hostile policy on her southern frontier is Viceroy of India. Mr.

Preface to the Third Edition

George N. Curzon long ago explained how Japan might have its share in assailing the territories of the Tsar. Time to develop such plans, and not any "parochial" domestic reforms in India, is perhaps the motive of Lord Curzon's desire for an extension of office. It will be little short of a marvel if he does not manœuvre the Empire into some dangerous situation. Lord Salisbury is dead, and Mr. Balfour is not much of a restraining force.

October 1, 1903.

PREFACE

THE author has adopted anonymity, though quite aware that it is the thinnest of screens, if there is any wish to pierce behind it. The fact of a twenty-eight years' acquaintance with India suggests some knowledge of the matters he discusses, whilst, after so long an exile, his name would be recognised by few. Moreover, in political controversy the author favours an impersonality similar to that which enables a journalist to leave his facts and arguments to speak for themselves. He desires to draw attention not to his own opinions, which are expressed with hesitation, but to the long array of weighty quotation, which he adduces, the statements of men like Sir George Wingate, Sir Richard Garth, Sir Ashley Eden, Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Steuart Bayley, Sir Charles Rivaz, Sir John Jardine, Sir W. W. Hunter, and a score of others, Governors and Imperial Councillors, Judges and Chief Commissioners. He would also solicit the fullest consideration for the unbiassed evidence of high-class journals, the *Englishman* of Calcutta, the *Pioneer* of Allahabad, *Capital*, and many others.

Since this book went to the printers the Indian Budget for 1903–4 has passed the Legislative Council. It introduced two modifications of taxation. The tax on every maund of salt, 82 lbs., has been reduced from 40 to 32 pence—one penny less in every 10 lbs., which is about the annual consumption of each individual Indian. One penny a year will not seriously lighten their burden, but it represents the present ideal of "Imperial" munificence to the poor. The second change raised the lower limit of annual income, liable to income tax, from 500 to 1,000 rupees, an appreciable benefit to an already well-to-do class, the small tradesmen, whose contributions to revenue are always small. The average income of the town labourer is about 50 rupees a year, under £4, whilst that of his agriculturist fellow is roundly half of that pittance.

The most prominent feature, however, of the new budget is the continued increase of military expenditure. The charges under this head have been :—

In 1899–1900	£14,165,743
,, 1900–1901	14,265,525
,, 1901–1902	14,786,342
,, 1902–1903	16,234,900
,, 1903–1904	16,352,300

The last figures represent the amount to be expended by the Army Department during the current year, but there are other items of strictly military outlay, which raise the total to £17,907,699.

The Indian public, European and native, protest

against the enormous increase from nine millions sterling in 1875, and Lord Curzon has found it advisable to beat the Jingo war-drum. In his speech in Council he declared that "The geographical position of India will more and more push her into the forefront of international politics; she will more and more become the strategical frontier of the British Empire." To talk of a "position" pushing anything anywhere may be intelligible to an "Imperialist," but to a sober-minded citizen, wishing to safeguard the grandest heritage of empire we possess, it would seem that the geographical position of India, her supreme defensive asset, ought to keep her outside the sphere of foreign intermeddling. Walled in by almost impenetrable mountain ranges, some of the highest and most rugged in the world, her position is one of quite exceptional security. Unfortunately, the "Imperialist" would never get his beloved wars if our armies and our diplomacy did not habitually seek fields of contention outside our natural boundaries. Had one-tenth part of the enormous sums wasted in Afghan wars and Black Mountain expeditions been employed in fortifying the frontier and its passes, it would by now be impregnable, and a Russian general would find Cape Town as easy to reach as Delhi.

But Lord Curzon's ambition is to be an "Empire Builder," as your hot Tory calls the pushful and pugnacious idols of his admiration. He does not want any long spoon in dealing with the Tsar and his armies. His dream is a real, big, hand-to-hand fight somewhere — anywhere. Constantinople or Corea

might do, but the plains of Persia would suit him nicely. With famine following famine in nearly every province of India, and desolating plague everywhere, who will deny that we have at last found a truly "Imperialist" Viceroy?

The recent debate in the House of Lords (May 5, 1903), proves that Persia is the new objective of "Imperialist" fatuity. Nothing on earth can prevent Russia from making her way to the sea. The desire to do so is about as statesmanlike as was our late attempt to bribe the Shah by so valuable a present as the ribbon of the Garter. The commerce of Central Asia must flow down to the Indian Ocean by means of one or more railways as surely as a river of water down a mountain side. We may delay the inevitable by a great war and by again putting our millions on the wrong horse, but would it not be wiser to depend on our navy and on sea power for supremacy in the Persian Gulf? A land struggle with Russia would not be less expensive than our late avoidable war in South Africa; say, £250,000,000 sterling. If £10,000,000 were expended in making Kurrachi or Bombay and Aden really first-class naval bases, we might laugh at any European Power, Russia or Germany or France, that sought to oust us from our position in Eastern waters. Even if we spend £25,000,000 we would still have permanent value for our money, instead of squandering, probably in one year, ten times the amount in a bloody war with little certainty of ultimate success. The total value of our trade with the Gulf ports in 1901 was only £2,300,000 and our profit, at 10 per cent., less than

a quarter of a million sterling, a turnover and a profit far smaller than many London business houses can boast of. "Imperialism" is one long drawn out amazing folly, and Lord Curzon is its prophet in Asia.

THE AUTHOR.

PS.—The following statistics of plague mortality are evidence of the terrible calamity now oppressing India and still being sedulously concealed from the knowledge of the English people: 1896—1,700 deaths; 1897—56,000 deaths; 1898—118,000 deaths; 1899—135,000 deaths; 1900—93,000 deaths; 1901—274,000 deaths; 1902—577,000 deaths; 1903, three months—roundly, 250,000 deaths. Assuredly these are fitting days for Durbar festivities!

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To the Right Honourable

The Earl of Rosebery, K.G., K.T., D.C.L., LL.D.

THE NEW EFFICIENCY—"DISMALLY BELIED"

My Lord,—

It is some fifteen years since I had the honour to be presented to you in India, when you were good enough to listen to my views on some matters of public interest. You were then the strong right arm of the Liberal Party, the man chosen to take up the great inheritance of Gladstone, and to give a new life and a wider extension to the principles of well-ordered Liberalism. There were some in India in those days, who hoped that a personal acquaintance with our great Eastern Empire might induce you to take a keener and more informed interest in Indian affairs than purely home-bred politicians have given to the most important of Imperial topics.

A Great Inheritance.

Your Lordship has enunciated vigorously the

Doctrine of Efficiency and proclaimed that thoroughness is the very root of national greatness. Unfortunately what efficiency really means is a matter that may be very differently interpreted. A very few months ago, before the trained statesmanship of Sir Antony MacDonnell was placed at Mr. Wyndham's disposal, the man in the street might not unreasonably conclude that a dormitoryful of plank-bedded M.P.'s formed his acme of efficiency. Has it not been suggested that, when Mr. Brodrick deported Lord Kitchener safely to a Himalayan hill-top, the ways of efficiency were made straight for army corps on paper and the latest fashion in military clothes?

The Efficiency Policy.

I have taken the great liberty of addressing your Lordship in order to ask your attention to a still more notable example of misdirected efficiency. In Far India Lord Curzon is busy in making a clean sweep of every principle, on which Indian polity has been built up. He is, in fact, an efficient of a very noticeable kind, an eager, hard-working man of quite phenomenal activity, interfering in every department, with which he is least acquainted, and flouting the advice of every one of experience, European and native alike. Lord Curzon's *début* in India was the most promising, even brilliant, that man could desire. All classes hastened to welcome him. The most cynical were taken by the idea of this almost boy politician already arrived at such a pinnacle of authority. Europeans, even those who ought to have known better, were glad of a change from Lord Elgin's

Lord Curzon's début.

homely Scotch ways. They had forgotten that what India needs and always will need is patient level-headedness. There are lots of brains in India, but there are keen ambitions too, and there is no field in the Empire, where a pushful man, clothed on in "patriotism," can, if unchecked, do himself more good and his country more injury. The natives also welcomed Lord Curzon. That so young a man should have risen by what seemed his unaided ability to the power and far more than the power that centred in the throne of the Moghuls, was a picture that stirred their imagination. Aided by a not ineffective eloquence, with great beauty standing by his side and surrounded by the glamour of much wealth, the new Viceroy was the cynosure of most eyes as he landed at Bombay.

The New Pretensions.

The dream did not last long. Even the more giddy of the dominant race soon began to draw comparisons between the new pretensions, the striving after effect, the A.D.C.'s always in evidence, the ever-present, often out-of-place, pageantry, the bounding exuberance of a vainglorious personality, and the courtly yet simple manners, which made Government House a centre of noble refinement in the days of Lord Dufferin and Lord Lansdowne. I will not waste many words on this side of Lord Curzon's new *régime*. It is enough to say that it was typical of the man,—a man, who for five long years would hold in his hands the singularly delicate mechanism of Indian administration. It showed that he had mistaken the society, of which he had suddenly become the head. The Anglo-Indian is

surfeited with shows and gaudiness and, though ill-informed Europeans are still ignorant of the fact, the native of India, at least the only Indian, whose opinion is worth conciliating, is quite as contemptuous in regard to the spectacles, which Lord Curzon would wish to make our daily meat.

A Restless Upsetter.

Lord Salisbury recently poured out in words of cultured rebuke his pity on those, who would settle the affairs of the world in the poor span of their short lives. There were many, who thought that Mr. Chamberlain was not absent from his Lordship's mind, when uttering these words. In India we half hoped that the wise advice was addressed in part at least to our disturber, for it is as a would-be reformer, as a restless upsetter of things long established that every thoughtful statesman must condemn the present Viceroy.

I will endeavour in the following pages to show amongst other things—

A Threefold Failure.

(i.) That Lord Curzon in a short four years has offended beyond forgiveness the educated classes of Indians.

(ii.) That, though continually face to face with famine, he has refused to take the most experienced advice, whilst his policy is pushing the mass of the agricultural population lower and lower in the slough of misery and starvation.

(iii.) That, although most conciliatory in language, he has initiated a manner of dealing with native princes, which must engender discontent.

Had Lord Salisbury read the first page of the preface to the two pretentious volumes, which the Hon.

George N. Curzon, M.P., issued in 1892 on "Persia and the Persian Question," he might have appreciated how mentally unfit the present Viceroy is for the understanding of a great and complex empire like India. "This book," Mr. Curzon wrote, "which is the result of three years' almost uninterrupted labour, of a journey of six months' duration to the country concerned, as well as of previous travel in adjacent regions, and of communications maintained ever since with the most qualified resident authorities in Persia, is issued in the not, I hope, vainglorious hope that, until superseded by a better, it may be regarded as the standard work in the English language on the subject to which it refers." The extraordinary suggestion that a work based on a bare six months' personal knowledge of the country should supersede all previous descriptions, many by men, who had passed a lifetime in Persia, is, like his "vainglorious" ostentation in his present high office, characteristic of Lord Curzon.

"A Vainglorious Hope."

It would be entirely foreign to my present purpose to criticise these volumes on Persia. Still it is interesting to give an instance of their value as a "standard" authority on Persian affairs. In discussing railway projects in the north of that country, Mr. Curzon enveighed against "the ineptitude of Russian policy." "Personally," said my Lord High Critic, very much in the style in which more recently he has dealt *de haut en bas* with Indian administrators, "I do not think that the Russian diplomats are wise in their generation." How these trained tacticians in Eastern politics must

"Dismally Belied."

have enjoyed the "personal" and valuable opinion of the brilliant and amusing youth, who was quite prepared to teach them their business after a "journey of six 'months' duration to the country!" It would now be unprofitable to waste space on an examination of Mr. Curzon's proofs of Russian soft-headedness, but it is worth noting that Mr. H. J. Whigham, the very capable special correspondent of the *Morning Post*, in a letter published in that journal on the 27th of last September, had the ineffable "ineptitude" to say that Russian policy in regard to Persian railways has been marked by the patient foresight proverbial in Muscovite diplomacy, whilst as to Lord Curzon's views, he dismissed them with the curt and cruel remark that "no forecast of events could possibly have been more dismally belied." It is a matter of open knowledge that Lord Curzon's opinions in regard to China and the cosmopolitan politics, which revolve round Pekin, as set forth in his "Problems of the Far East," have been as painfully slapdash and unreliable as his "standard" lucubrations on Persia.

Lurid "Statistics."

Before entering on a detailed examination of the many points, in which Lord Curzon's administration of India has been a failure, I would ask your Lordship to consider a short passage from one of his most recent minutes. Last year he published a defence of famine policy in India. I may at once say that no such defence was needed. The relief of famines in India during the past quarter of a century form one of the most noble pages in the history of the British nation. There are many, who regard the excessive demands of land taxation as a

cause of famine, but no one denies the splendid charity and efficiency of the system of relief developed by Lord Curzon's predecessors, "I have looked up," he wrote, "the statistics of the last great famine that occurred in Bengal, while the province was still under native administration. This was in the year 1770." Statistics in 1770 amidst the utter *debâcle* of native government, which made our conquest a matter of a single battle! This minute was specially intended for our home consumption and was in fact laid before Parliament, and I am quite sure nine-tenths of English readers admired the industry of the "Great Viceroy." Lord Curzon's "statistics," none of which were quoted, showed that "the streets of the cities were blocked up with promiscuous heaps of the dead and dying; even the dogs and jackals could not accomplish their revolting work," and similar rodomontade. "Disease attacked the starving and shelterless survivors, and swept them off by hundreds of thousands. Before the end of May, 1770, one-third of the population was officially calculated to have disappeared." Who were the officials, and where are their reports? A few unreliable guesses are extant, but not a single statistical figure. I know Bengal well and gravely doubt the whole lurid picture. Warren Hastings reported in 1772, when statistically discussing the outturn of the land revenue, that "the net collections of 1771 exceeded even those of 1768," up to then a record year.

Lord Curzon's object was to compare this dread state of things with the success of his own measures in the preceding three years. Here again a com-

parison is uncalled for. The British Government has poured out millions in magnificent profusion of charity, but Lord Curzon must be unreliable and must be inaccurate. "What the actual mortality may have been," he wrote, "it is impossible to tell with complete accuracy. At a later date the forthcoming census will throw useful light upon the problem." Poor Viceroy! even the industry which could unearth the "statistics" of 1770 was not equal to the task of discovering in 1902 the figures of the census taken in February, 1901. I think the exact distance of the Census Commissioner's office in Simla from Government House is one mile and a quarter, and that admirable official had published "completely accurate" figures in October, 1901, and practically accurate figures in March of that year. Perhaps the census figures did not quite fit in with Lord Curzon's theory, which arrived at "an excess mortality of half a million in British India more or less attributable to famine conditions." In the same month that this estimate of famine deaths *was laid before Parliament*, the Census Report of the Central Provinces, one of the minor administrative divisions of the Empire, by Mr. R. V. Russell, showed a decrease of 832,000 in population, chiefly due to famine, whilst Mr. Enthoven's report on the Bombay Census summarised a lengthened and truly statistical examination of the population in these simple but terrible words: "Thus it seems that the grand total mortality ascribable to special causes in the Presidency, for the areas where such special causes have operated freely, must have been in round figures about

Half a Million or Four Millions. Which?

3,000,000," of which it is known that 268,890 deaths or a little more than one-fifteenth part was due to plague, the immense balance being caused by starvation. I will discuss at much length at a subsequent page the whole question of poverty, especially in Bombay. Here I wish only to emphasise the hopeless unreliability of Lord Curzon in statistics as in politics. "No forecast" could be "more dismally belied."

Fair Treatment.

I hope that your Lordship will recognise in these pages a desire to treat Lord Curzon fairly, to recognise his undoubted good qualities of heart, as well as his unquestionable ability. I regard Lord Curzon as a kindly man and a very clever man, who, unfortunately, in the desire to emulate the "Imperialism" of Mr. Chamberlain, has trodden under foot every principle of sober statesmanship and very often justice, tact, and foresight in dealing with a vast population, which our taxation has brought to the verge of ruin.

The British Soldier.

There is another point also, on which I would venture on what may seem a prefatory apology. I feel the difficulty of criticising those of one's own household. I shall have to speak with much outspokenness of the calamitous results of taxation, due to a policy of military adventure, as well as to excessive military budgets. I do so with the full knowledge of what India owes to the British Army, and with a friendly admiration for the finest body of troops in the world. It is the power of the sword, which secures to the people of India the great blessings of peace and order,

which were unknown through many weary centuries of turmoil, bloodshed, and pillage before the advent of the British soldier. After the consolidation of the Empire in 1849, by the final defeat of the Sikh Confederacy, our army was for a long time a defensive force and kept within the limits, which a poor though populous nation could afford. For the past quarter of a century, however, an offensive war policy has grown up and is making demands in the form of taxation that is the chief agent in the pauperisation of India. I also gladly put it on record, as the experience of many years of Indian service, that the British soldier in India is, on the whole, admirably well-behaved. Lord Curzon has done a great public service by his severity in the rare cases of brutal wrong-doing that have come to his notice, but, taking it all in all, no body of troops similarly circumstanced have ever treated a conquered people with greater humanity. I know that the great majority of officers feel that an Englishman can be guilty of no more cowardly act than to ill-use men of the weak, servile castes, from whom domestic servants are mostly drawn.

A Rogue Patriotism.

"Imperialism" has been defined as the policy of doing unto others what you would die rather than have done to yourself, a kind of rogue patriotism, that regards the love of country, one of the noblest of human feelings, only as a commercial asset and a cloak for international dishonesty. I am convinced that there is no policy more abhorrent to your Lordship, and that by Liberal Imperialism you mean a firm protection of the greatest Empire in the world, guided by the old Liberal prin-

ciples of honour in politics, respect for your neighbour's goods, and veneration for the fair name of your country. I have written in the hope, "the vainglorious hope," I quite allow, of making it clear to Liberals who are not quite satisfied with that good old title, that they must be Liberals first, and should never forget that, when God gave empire to England, it was not in order to fleece subject races nor in order to build up great armies at the cost of such a mass of human misery as the slow starvation of millions and millions of people in India involves.

The Limits of Well-being.

That there is prosperity in India in certain areas I would be the first to admit, and I may illustrate the fact by a simile. Your Lordship will readily remember the position of our armies in South Africa during the second year of the recent war. They held all the lines of railway and most of the towns and villages, whilst out on the veldt the Boer ranged at large. So it is in India. Civilisation and an appreciable degree of comfort mark the cities and hamlets along the railroads and main highways. The commercial activity of many markets, the sleek native trader and sleeker European merchant, the smartly dressed railway servants, the grain-laden carts, and the general appearance of well-being, are noticeable on every side in such localities. The ordinary traveller, the three-months-in-India tripper, is naturally deceived. But out on the veldt, not only in remote villages but in the suburbs of the towns, the huts of the peasantry are squalid and empty, oppressed by a dire poverty, which all the highest authorities on Indian administration feel to be the most anxious

question of the future. Two-thirds of the Indian population, some 200,000,000 of human beings, are made up of ever-hungry cultivators and day labourers.

If there is inexorable need of heavy taxation, then place it on the shoulders of those, who can bear it, of those, to whom it does not mean starvation The Indian merchant is not heavily assessed; indeed, it is doubtful whether he is called on to support his fair share of the public burdens. But this is a wide question, which cannot be discussed here. My chief thesis in the following pages is that the agricultural classes, who are sunk in poverty, are taxed beyond all reason, and that the present Government of India is continuing and accentuating a desolating policy. If this is Little Englandism one may well be content to accept the implied opprobrium. It was not "Imperialism" that won the loyalty of India, but a truer ideal of greatness, which seems to be in much danger of being lost to English politics.

The Indian Merchant Lightly Taxed.

During the past few years—that is, during the viceregin of Lord Curzon—the Tory Press in England and Scotland has given prominence to frequent articles describing the growing prosperity of India. An abounding revenue is chiefly pointed to as evidence of a happy Indian people. The average silly newspaper reader in this country gulps down such statements without inquiring how a well-filled treasury may be obtained. He never inquires what percentage on income does Indian taxation represent. He knows quite intelligently that a shilling in the pound income-tax is in England a

Prosperity on a 55 per cent. Income-tax.

heavy burden. It means 5 per cent. of his income gone to maintain the army and navy. In a period of national stress and danger he bears it like a man, and rejoices that his "great sacrifice" supplies the sinews of war. Would he glory in "an abounding revenue," "a prosperous treasury," if year by year he had to pay even 5 per cent. income-tax? How "prosperous" he would feel if it was not only 5 per cent. were taken from him every year, but 10 per cent.! What a gay and contented and aboundingly loyal subject the Briton would be if the tax rose, not to 10, but to 50 per cent.! And yet it is a fact that in "Prosperous India" the annual taxation on land over nearly all its provinces is equivalent to at least a 55 per cent. income-tax.

I would beg your Lordship to please not throw this little book into the waste-paper basket. Its literary style may deserve such a fate, but not its figures. Please read on half a dozen pages, and you will find that a great number of very distinguished Indian officials and Anglo-Indian journalists proclaim the accuracy of my statements.

To stem the tide of Misstatement.

It is high time that an attempt should be made to stem the tide of misstatement, to combat the well-organised conspiracy on the part of the "Imperialist" Party in England to mislead the people of this country in regard to the economic condition of the people of India. I would, therefore, venture to invite your Lordship's very special consideration to the following chapter. Although an one-sided statement—an one-sidedness, which I freely confess to—it presents a view of the Indian picture, which should not be concealed from the

English public. Your Lordship will, I am convinced, agree with me that the language used is studiously moderate. My whole desire is to lay before my fellow-countrymen not my own views, which they may reasonably question, but the opinions, the reports, the well-considered statements of British officials of the highest class, as well as the hardly less authoritative comments of the English Press in India, every journal quoted being of admittedly strong Conservative and Governmental leanings.

ENGLISHMEN are not unnaturally nor unreasonably proud of many of the results of their administration of the vast Indian Empire during the century that has just passed away. Not unnaturally, also, the system of government, which has been brought to such perfection in Hindustan, is offered as a high exemplar to other nations with somewhat similar territories to administer. A system, which has built up the great commercial centres of Bombay and Calcutta, which has spread a great network of railways throughout the land, and which has given such evidence of high civilisation in colleges and schools and hospitals, must deserve imitation. These great benefits are, indeed, so patent, lying as they do on the very surface, that they must attract the notice of every traveller and of even every casual reader of the daily Press. There is, however, a knowledge that is not so easily arrived at, which is acquired during long residence in India, and which comes from a deeper acquaintance with the country and its inhabitants. The fact is that this attractive, even splendid, superstructure of administration is based on a poverty, often a misery, amongst the masses of the people, which would be incredible if it were not attested by

A Deeper Acquaintance.

witnesses of the highest repute. Taxation, rendered necessary by the same "Imperialist" *furor* that now exists in England, over-taxation of the most grinding kind, is eating out the life of the Indian races, and surely preparing for the English nation one of the most heartrending problems ever offered to man for solution, viz., the government of hundreds of millions of people always on the brink of starvation.

A Remarkable Petition.

In order to attract attention to a matter of the utmost imperial importance it is undesirable to draw a highly coloured picture, though some of the quotations in the following pages are not wanting in vigour of expression. The first opinion, which I beg to lay before your Lordship, is certainly a very quietly worded one, and none the less effective for that reason. It is a memorial or petition presented at the beginning of last year to the Secretary of State for India by a body of retired Indian officials, for the most part men of special distinction, of great experience, and of the highest authority. Of the gentlemen, who ventured to offer advice to a Secretary of State, the most noticeable is Sir Richard Garth, late Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta, and formerly a well-known Conservative Q.C. in England. Four of them have been Members of the Council of the Viceroy or of local governors. Most of them have held or passed above the grade of Commissioner of a Division, which in executive rank is next to that of a Governor of a Province, a division being a sub-province with a population varying from five to sixteen millions of inhabitants. The memorial ran thus :—

Famine and Taxation

To the Right Honourable Lord George Francis Hamilton, M.P., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, India Office, Whitehall, S.W.

My Lord,—

In view of the terrible famines with which India has been lately afflicted, we, the undersigned, who have spent many years of our lives among the people, and still take a deep interest in their welfare, beg to offer the following suggestions to your Lordship in Council, in the hope that the Land Revenue administration may be everywhere placed on such a sound and equitable basis as to secure to the cultivators of the soil a sufficient margin of profit to enable them better to withstand the pressure of future famines.

2. We are well aware that the primary cause of famines is the failure of rain, and that the protection of large tracts of country by the extension of irrigation from sources that seldom or never fail has been steadily kept in view and acted on by the Government for many years past; but the bulk of the country is dependent on direct rainfall, and the pinch of famine is most severely felt in the uplands, where the crops fail simply for want of rain. The only hope for the cultivators throughout the greater part of India is therefore that they should be put in such a position as to enable them to tide over an occasional bad season.

3. To place the cultivators in such a position, we consider it essential that the share taken as the Government demand on the land should be strictly limited in every Province. We fully agree with the views of Lord Salisbury, when Secretary of State for India, as set out in his Minute of April 26, 1875 :—

> "So far as it is possible to change the Indian fiscal system, it is desirable that the cultivator should pay a smaller proportion of the whole national charge. It is not in itself a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from the rural districts, where capital is scarce, sparing the towns, where it is often redundant, and runs to waste and luxury. The injury is exaggerated in the case of India, where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent."

4. Without going into tedious detail, we consider it very advisable that, in those parts of the country in which the Land Tax is not permanently settled, the following principles should be uniformly adhered to :—

(*a*) Where the Land Revenue is paid directly by the cultivator, as in most parts of Madras and Bombay, the Government demand should be limited to 50 per cent. of the value of the net produce, after a liberal deduction for cultivation expenses has been made, and should not ordinarily exceed one-fifth of the gross produce, even in those parts of the country where, in theory, one-half of the net is assumed to approximate to one-third of the gross produce.

(*b*) Where the Land Revenue is paid by landlords, the principle adopted in the Saharanpur Rules of 1855, whereby the Revenue demand is limited to one-half of the actual rent or assets of such landlords, should be universally applied.

(*c*) That no revision of the Land Tax of any Province or part thereof should be made within thirty years of the expiration of any former revision.

(*d*) That when such revision is made in any of those parts of India where the Land Revenue is paid by the cultivators direct to the Government, there should be no increase in the assessment except in cases where the land has increased in value (1) in consequence of improvements in irrigation works carried out at the expense of the Government, or (2) on account of a rise in the value of produce, based on the average prices of the thirty years next preceding such revision.

5. Lastly, we recommend that a limit be fixed in each Province beyond which it may not be permissible to surcharge the Land Tax with local cesses. We are of opinion that the Bengal rate of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. is a fair one, and that in no case should the rate exceed 10 per cent.

We have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servants,

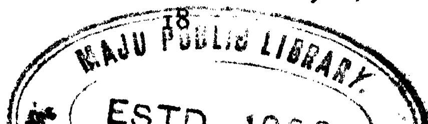
24, Palace Court, W.,
20th December, 1900.

(Signed)

R. K. Puckle,
Late Director of Revenue Settlement, and Member of the Board of Revenue, Madras.

J. H. Garstin,
Late Member of Council, Madras.

J. B. Pennington,
Late Collector of Tanjore, Madras.



H. J. REYNOLDS,
Late Revenue Secretary to the Government of Bengal, and late Member of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General of India.

RICHARD GARTH,
Late Chief Justice of Bengal.

ROMESH C. DUTT,
Late Offg. Commissioner of Orissa Division in Bengal, and Member of the Bengal Legislative Council.

C. J. O'DONNELL,
Late Commissioner of the Bhagalpur and Rajshahi Divisions in Bengal.

A. ROGERS,
Late Settlement Officer and Member of Council in Bombay.

W. WEDDERBURN,
Late Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay.

JOHN JARDINE,
Late Judge of the High Court of Bombay.

J. P. GOODRIDGE,
Late B.C.S., and formerly Offg. Settlement Commissioner, C.P.

Its Prayer Summarised.

The essence of the prayer or rather advice offered is contained in the fourth paragraph, the three first being explanatory or introductory. Put shortly, it urges upon the Government of India that the following principles should be adopted in its revenue demands "in order to place the cultivators in such a position as to enable them to tide over an occasional bad season"—

(i.) That, where land revenue is levied direct from the farmers or cultivators, the demand should not exceed one-half or 50 per cent. of their net profit after disbursing the cost of cultivation.

(ii.) That, where land revenue is levied from landlords, the demand should not exceed one-half or 50 per cent. of the rental obtained by them from their tenantry.

(iii.) That a settlement should have a currency of thirty years, and

(iv.) That local taxation on the land should not exceed a further 5 per cent.

The "Equitable Basis" of a 55 per cent. Income-tax.

In other words, whether taxation, imperial and local, is derived directly from the landlords or from the tenantry it should not exceed an income-tax of 55 *per cent.* It is difficult to understand how even this limit can be "a sound and equitable basis" which would "secure to the cultivators a sufficient margin of profit to enable them to withstand the pressure of famine." Yet this is the prayer. The fact is, as I will show, more staggering. The tax gatherer is rarely satisfied with exacting this enormous tribute.

Taxation or Drought?

The history of the Land Tax assessment in Bombay is especially interesting, as Bombay has been for years the by-word of India for perennial famine and pestilence. The Census taken in 1901 proved that the population of the Bombay Presidency has fallen by three millions, although myriads immigrated from the neighbouring Native States in order to share in the relief measures, recently carried out in ample degree. The official explanation is that the calamities, from which this great province is suffering, are the work of Providence, the Indian Office attributing them to the shortcomings of the rain god alone. The progress of the assess-

ment of the Land Tax suggests a more mundane origin.

Excessive growth of Taxation.

The dominions of the Mahratta sovereign passed under British rule in 1817, the then land revenue, which was assessed in lump sums on each village community, being 80 lakhs of rupees, a lakh being 100,000. The following year it was raised to 115 lakhs, and in 1823 to 150 lakhs, already nearly double the native assessment of six years before. In 1825 a detailed assessment was attempted, separate settlements being made with the individual farmers. Writing nearly seventy years later, the Government of Bombay in its Administration Report for 1892–93, page 76, gave the following description of the operations of that time: "Every effort was made—lawful and unlawful—to get the utmost out of the wretched peasantry, who were subjected to torture—in some instances cruel and revolting beyond description—if they could not or would not yield what was demanded. Numbers abandoned their homes and fled into neighbouring Native States; large tracts of land were thrown out of cultivation, and in some districts no more than a third of the cultured area remained in occupation." In 1836 another settlement was commenced and completed in 1872, with a total assessment of 203 lakhs or an increase of 35 per cent. In 1866 the leases of 1836, which were of a 30 years' currency, began to fall in, and another settlement was commenced, and is still proceeding. Up to March 31, 1899, only 13,369 out of the 27,781 villages in the province had been resettled, their revenue being

enhanced from 144 lakhs to 188 lakhs, or a further increase of 30 per cent. In 1896 a few of these new leases began again to come to their limit, and a last settlement was attempted only to be brought to a standstill by famine. Still 78 villages round Poona were resettled, their taxation being increased from 103,530 rupees to 133,590 rupees or again by 30 per cent.

The enormous enhancements of the second settlement led to serious riots and disorders in 1877, and a Commission was appointed to inquire into their causes. It consisted of a judge, two revenue officials from the North-Western Provinces, and two revenue officials from Bombay. Only the first three can be regarded as independent; the two latter being subordinate to the Bombay Government, whose revenue administration was substantially on its trial.

"Extravagantly Heavy" Enhancements.

The *Pioneer*, which is the most Conservative journal in India, and, in fact, is ordinarily regarded as the mouthpiece of the Government,[1] summarised the conclusions of the Committee in these words: "Of the five members of the Committee, three" (the independent members), "namely, the judicial and the two North-West members, reply that it (the final element of distress that broke the ryots' heart) must be looked for in the revised land revenue assessments, in themselves extravagantly heavy.' "The arguments of the majority," it continued, "form a grave indictment against the Bombay Revenue

[1] Its proprietors have been knighted in recognition of their services.

Survey. Briefly they may be thus summarised: The enhancements made at the recent revision were, judging by all known standards, excessive. Viewed in conjunction with the status of those, on whom they were imposed, they were *ruinous*. They were framed, finally, for the most part on conjectural and merely arithmetical data, much of which seems wrong. As to the excessiveness of the assessments, it is shown on the Survey figures that the enhancement, as imposed originally, ranged in different talukas (sub-districts) from 33 to 66 per cent. On individual villages it was often doubled; on individual holdings it was constantly more than doubled."

An Angry Protest.

"The assessment," added the *Pioneer*, "is judged from its own mouth; and we find it imposing enhancements of 38 per cent. in the face of admitted depression, or forcing 77 per cent. down the throats of the local officers." The local officers were the District Officers of Bombay, experienced members of the India Civil Service. It is often thus in India. The almost all-redeeming feature of maladministration is that it is ever battled against loyally and often successfully by brave-hearted Englishmen, whose local experience and sympathies have not been blinded and blunted by the so-called necessities of finance. Indeed, I would venture to say that there are few countries where officials have risked more than in India for the sake of the truth that is distasteful in high quarters. One distinguished Bombay officer, Sir George Wingate, did not mince matters: "What

must have been the state of things," he angrily exclaimed, "which can compel cultivators, proverbially patient and long-suffering, accustomed to more or less of ill-usage and injustice at all times, to redress their wrongs by murder, and in defiance of an ignominious death to themselves? How must their sense of justice have been violated? How must they have been bereft of all hope of redress from law or Government before their patient and peaceful natures could be roused to the point of desperation required for such a deed?"

"The Yoke of British Misgovernment."

The Government organ, the *Pioneer*, in a second article, was not less outspoken: "Worried by the revenue survey," it wrote, "for heavily enhanced public payments, enslaved by his private creditor, dragged into court only to have imposed upon him the intolerable burden of fresh decrees, without even the resource of flight, which was open to his forefathers before the kindred scourge of Holkar, the Deccan ryot accepted, for the third of a century, with characteristic patience and silence, the yoke of British misgovernment. For thirty years, as we now learn from the papers published, he had been at once the scandal and the anxiety of his masters. Report upon report had been written upon him; shelf upon shelf in the public offices groaned under the story of his wrongs. If any one doubts the naked accuracy of these words let him dip into the pages of Appendix A (Papers on the Indebtedness of the Agricultural Classes in Bombay). A more damning indictment was never recorded against a civilised Government. From 184

to 1874, successive Administrations have been appealed to, have been warned, or have been urged. Each, in its turn, has replied—as the present will doubtless answer to the late Committee's importunities—with a suave sigh of *non possumus*. The hospitalities of Dapooree or Ganeshkhind (the palaces of the Bombay Governor) have for thirty years been lavished in graceful and generous profusion; while the ryot, who paid for them, lay hard by in enforced and ruinous idleness, a debtor in the Poona gaol; or ate at their gates in the field, of which the fruits had once been his own, the bitter bread of slavery."

"Stupidity." "Greed."

It is true that this seems the language of exaggeration; yet, after making every allowance for the influence of a just indignation, it is impossible to deny that the history of this century presents few more lamentable pictures of maladministration by a European nation than does this paragraph from one of the most Conservative journals in the Empire. "So," it continues, "the survey officers (of the land revenue) came and went, adding each his thousands and tens of thousands to the public assessments. Marwaris (money-lenders) swarmed up, in ever-increasing flights, from the far north-west, and settled down on the devoted acres. Decrees of the courts flew like arrow-flights into the thickest of the population, striking down the tallest and the most notable. *Stupidity, blindness, indifference, greed—inability, in a word, in all its thousand forms—settled down, like the fabled harpies, on the ryot's bread, and bore off with them all that he subsisted upon.*" Kindly Englishmen may

well rub their eyes and ask if there is not some mistake. Can this possibly be a description of the work of a Conservative British Government by a Conservative British journal? Surely it must be Turkish misrule in Asia Minor that was thus denounced, and still the official explanation of famine in Bombay continues to be an insufficient rainfall.

Mr. Caird's Protest.

Mr. James Caird, C.B., Member of the Famine Commission of 1878, writing to the Secretary of State for India on October 31, 1879, after describing the poverty of India and how the famine of the preceding two years had cost Bombay and Madras five millions of lives, continued: "The pressure on the means of subsistence is rendered more severe by the moral disorganisation produced by laws, affecting property and debt, not adapted to the condition of the people. In most parts of India, as shown by the late proceedings in the Legislative Council on the Deccan Ryots Relief Bill, and as is plain to any careful observer in the country, the people are not only dissatisfied with our legal system, but while the creditor is not much enriched, the debtor is being impoverished by it. *Those British officials who see this, feel themselves powerless to influence a central authority far removed from them, subject to no control of public opinion*, and overburdened with details, with which it is incapable of dealing." The Central authority, which will not listen to the local British officials, is the Indian Office and the Viceregal Government at Simla, which is controlled by "Imperialistic" influence, and ever in want of money for military railways,

frontier wars, and schemes of reorganisation. The debt of India increased between 1875 and 1900 from £95,000,000 to £199,000,000, and the military charges from roundly 120 millions to 230 millions of rupees.

"The Enormous Increase."

I need not describe the state of things in Madras and the Central Provinces in detail, but a few facts in regard to their revenue assessment prove that the load of taxation is in their case quite as heavy as in Bombay, and that it has been enhanced, mercilessly screwed up during recent years in quite as unjustifiable a degree. Again I quote a Conservative journal, the *Englishman*, of Calcutta, the foremost newspaper of the capital of India. On February 17, 1880, it wrote: "The late Madras famine has raised the question as to what the Government has done to protect the agriculture of Southern India, in return for the revenue raised from it. On the one hand, there can be no doubt that the Madras revenue has been very greatly increased since India passed to the Crown. In that year, 1858–59, the land revenue of Madras was under 3¼ millions sterling, and its average during the previous five years had been under 3½ millions. In 1876, the year before the late famine, it was 4½ millions; and this may be taken as its lowest average at the present time, excluding seasons of dearth. Twenty years of British rule have, therefore, increased the Government demand upon the agriculture of Madras by over one million, or one-third of the whole land revenue paid by that Presidency to the Company in 1858. There are not

wanting those who affirm that this increased taxation had much to do with the late calamity. The husbandmen were less able, according to this view, to bear the strain of bad seasons, *in consequence of the enormous increase in the revenue taken from them*." A 30 per cent. increase in thirty years brought famine and riot in Bombay. A 33 per cent. increase in twenty years in Madras naturally had no better results.

Lord Ripon's Attempt at Reform.

Lord Ripon made an attempt to stop these reckless enhancements, and in 1883, with the full support of the Governor of Madras and his Council, laid down the principle that in Districts, which had once been surveyed and assessed by the Settlement Department, assessments should undergo no further revision, except on the sole ground of a rise in the prices of agricultural produce. The Secretary of State in London kept the question hanging over till the retirement of Lord Ripon, and then in 1885 vetoed his most proper proposals. Land revenue enhancement is still progressing merrily, and another half million sterling has been added during the past twenty years. During the past two years, that is, since the beginning of the present century, there have been enhancements of land tax in Malabar of 84, 85, and 105 per cent. in different revenue sub-districts.

850,000 Farmers Sold Out of House and Home.

The results are what might be expected, and in in 1893 the Hon. Mr. G. Rogers, of the Indian Civil Service, and Member of the Bombay Council, writing to the Under Secretary of State for India, declared: "In the eleven years from 1879–80 to 1889–90

there were sold by auction for the collection of land revenue the occupancy rights of 1,963,364 acres of land held by 840,713 defaulters, in addition to *personal* property of the value of Rs. 29,65,081. Of the 1,963,364 acres, 1,174,143 had to be bought in on the part of Government for want of bidders, that is to say, very nearly 60 per cent. of the land supposed to be fairly and equitably assessed could not find purchasers, and only the balance of 779,142 acres was sold. The evils of the Mahratta farming system (in Bombay) have been pointed out in my 'History of the Bombay Land Revenue,' but I doubt if that system at its worst could have shown such a spectacle as that of nearly 850,000 ryots (heads of families) in the course of eleven years sold out of about 1,900,000 acres of land." *Roundly one-eighth part of the entire agricultural population was sold out of house and home in little more than a decade. Not only were their farms brought to auction, but their poor personal belongings, their plough cattle and their cooking utensils, their beds and everything but their scanty clothes were sold to provide money for mostly "Imperialist" adventure.* The picture is incomplete till it is remembered that these eleven years of "denudation" immediately followed the terrible famine of 1877–78, during which Madras lost three millions of its inhabitants by starvation.

Cent. per Cent. Enhancements.

The case of the Central Provinces is even worse. Thirty per cent. enhancement would be considered merciful there. Only last year the Hon. B. K. Bose, a Member of the Viceroy's Council, stood up in the presence of Lord

Curzon and stated that: "Proceedings with a view to a second new Settlement are also in progress in Bilaspur and Raipur. These districts, especially the former, were very hard hit during the last famine. They are no less so this time. They were both newly assessed only *about ten years ago!* The enhancement in Bilaspur was 102 per cent. in some groups and 105 per cent. in others." And there was no denial. "The Great Viceroy" and his Council sat silent. Did they even listen? Their thoughts were probably far away, devising "Imperialist" schemes of new railways into Persia or China. Other districts were hardly less severely dealt with. The enhancement on the previous revenue demand was in some groups of villages in Saugor District, 68, 48 and 53 per cent.; in Jubbulpore District, 86, 77, 64, 62 and 50 per cent.; in Seoni District, 97, 95 and 92 per cent.; in Hoshungabad District, 96, 87 and 69 per cent., and in Raipur District 98 and 82 per cent. Moreover, the currency or term of the settlement was shortened from thirty to twenty years. The assessor will soon be at work again. The population in this comparatively sparsely peopled province of India, instead of increasing 10 or 12 per cent. as in happier parts of India, fell off by nearly one million souls during the past ten years.

65 per cent. the Government Limit.

The spirit in which the local and supreme Governments went to work in the assessment of the land revenue of the Central Provinces may be judged by the single fact that the former authority calmly asked the sanction of the Viceroy in Council to its making it a general principle

of the assessment *that the share of the State should be 65 per cent. of the landlord's rental!* Such a suggestion raised no indignation in the Simla mind, though the Government of India, in its letter No. 397, dated May 31, 1888, had "some hesitation in allowing in any case so high a percentage as sixty-five to be taken." Nevertheless it did grant the permission in some cases, and made 60 per cent. the maximum rate in all other cases. It is difficult to imagine the terms of reprobation that our landed magnates would apply to such principles of taxation, if applied to England, and in the Central Provinces of India, on top of these confiscatory revenue demands, there are local rates to be paid by the land to the extent of 12½ per cent. of the land revenue, for various purposes, chiefly for the maintenance of public works. In other words, between 65 and 70 per cent. of the landlord's rental, if it were all collected, is absorbed by the State. As it never is all collected, the Central Provinces proprietor is about the most "distressed landlord" to be found in the world. How gladly would he change places with the most afflicted of his Irish fellows! It is alleged that in order to live he screws and screws his tenantry, who starve and starve and die by myriads.

90 per cent. the Basis of the Permanent Settlement.

I think I can claim to have avoided any strong language or vigorous adjectives of my own. The highest officials supply them both freely. Bengal is blessed—I use the word advisedly—is blessed by whatis called the Permanent Settlement, that is to say, over a hundred years ago the land revenue to be paid by each estate was fixed in perpetuity. The first demand was, it is true,

ruinous, being ten-elevenths or a little over 90 per cent. of the rental of each estate. The landlords of those days simply collapsed by the gross. The old nobility was sold up and disappeared over three-fourths of the country, wealthy merchants from Calcutta buying up their estates in every District. The new landlords are now an opulent body. Not so their tenantry. Down to 1859 there was no law to protect them and rent enhancements went on amain. Even since then the rent law has been a dead letter in many parts. This is particularly true of the great sub-province of Behar, the scene of the famine of 1874, and of equally severe calamities during the past five years. The landlords may argue that it was the ruinous taxation they were at first subjected to that drove them to rack-renting. It certainly was maladministration on our part to allow their exactions to reach the pitch they did.

"Their inability to pay more."

Sir Richard Temple wrote in 1875, "Undoubtedly the condition of the peasantry is low in Behar—lower than in that of any other peasantry, with equal natural advantages." Behar is in fact the garden of India, peopled by 25,000,000 of singularly thrifty peasants. "Rents," he explained, "including therein the innumerable cesses, by which they are supplemented, are limited in the case of the majority of agriculturalists by little else than their inability to pay more."

Sir Ashley Eden succeeded Sir Richard Temple in 1877, and was not long in discovering that "The tenants are said to have no rights, to be subject to the exactions of forced labour, to illegal distraint

and to numerous illegal cesses, while the collections are made by an unscrupulous host of up-country bailiffs. There can be no doubt whatever that the combined influence of zemindars and ticcadars (land speculators) has ground the ryots of Behar down to a state of extreme depression and misery." Indeed, his indignation broke out into fresh anger when he described the tenantry of Behar as "poor, helpless, discontented men, driven about from village to village by the extortion of underlings or the exactions of irresponsible under-farmers—tenants who never know whether they will possess next year the land they occupy this, and who feel that any attempt to grow more profitable crops will only end in increased demands." "The ryots of the richest province of Bengal are the poorest and most wretched class we find in the country."

"Extreme Depression and Misery."

Sir Steuart Bayley, whose name will be long remembered with affection by the people of Behar, when Commissioner of Patna, one of the two great administrative divisions of Behar, declared that "the traditional oppression ever used towards the ryots is really of the most grinding nature in many parts." Entering more into particulars, the same officer added, "Taking the districts south of the Ganges first, I have in the sub-divisional officers' reports a series of the strongest and most sensational descriptions of the poverty and misery of the ryot. It is strange to find from the two neighbouring sub-divisions of Behar and Nowada similarly strong denunciations of the oppression habitually exercised by the zamindar towards the poorer class of

"Traditional Oppression."

ryot, and of the wretched condition of the latter, when we consider that one of these sub-divisional officers is a Bengali Brahmin and the other a Muhamadan of Behar, who speaks of a system with which he must have been familiar from his youth. 'A cultivator not in debt,' writes a Shahabad officer, 'is viewed with dislike and suspicion, and debt is their common burden. Fifty per cent. of the cultivators are in debt for grain lent by their landlords, and 40 per cent. are in debt to mahajans (village merchants and bankers) for either grain or money.' The Collector of Sarum adds his testimony thus: 'The zamindars, whenever they have a substantial share in a village, are, as a rule, oppressive; and on the estates of many of the larger zamindars, perhaps, the least consideration for the tenantry is shown.' Sir George Campbell declared: 'Nowhere have the rents of a peaceable, industrious, and submissive population been more screwed up than in Bhagulpore. It was the same action of the zamindar that was leading to rebellion in the Sonthal pergunnahs.'" Even a Lieut.-Governor can let himself go when he is describing the exactions of landlords in Bengal. He is generally more reticent when taxation by Government produces similar results in Bombay and Madras.

Pauperisation. A new rent Bill was passed, excellent in its provisions for Eastern Bengal, where alone in wide India the farmers are prosperous, but ineffective in Behar, and the state of Behar is still a menace to the country. The relief of the great famine there in 1874 cost the Indian Empire eight millions sterling. It would be unfair not to admit

that there has been much improvement in the methods of the landlords, but, as in Bombay, the pauperisation of the tenantry has been so thorough that amelioration seems to be almost beyond hope. A few years ago the district officers of Behar were called on for a special report on the economic condition of the agricultural population. Their replies may be epitomised in one short sentence. They found that nearly half the population, some twelve millions of people, in this minor province of India, during many months of the year live or die on one meal a day.

Forty-five per cent. of the Population Short of Food.

In 1893 Mr. G. A. Grierson, C.I.E., probably the best authority in connection with everything relating to the Behar Province, published "Notes on the District of Gaya," one of the largest districts of Behar. Reviewing this book in May of that year, the *Pioneer* described it as "an admirably faithful and complete picture, not only of the physical features, but of the economic and social conditions of the District. In this latter respect the little volume is a wonderfully complete exhibition of the *real India — not the India as it appears to the casual visitor in his swallow-flights across the continent, but the India of the Millions.*" After discussing the arguments set out in this work the *Pioneer* concluded thus: "If we sum up the facts Mr. Grierson thus puts before us regarding the various sections of the District population, the conclusion we arrive at is certainly not encouraging. Briefly, it is that all the persons of the labouring classes, and 10 per cent. of the cultivating and artisan classes, or 45 per cent. of the total population, are insufficiently

clothed or insufficiently fed, or both. In Gaya District this would give about a million persons without sufficient means of support. If we assume that the circumstances of Gaya are not exceptional—and there is no reason for thinking otherwise—it follows that nearly one hundred millions of people in British India are living in extreme poverty."

The Chief Magistrate of Patna, another Behar District (Mr. G. Toynbee, C.S.I.), afterwards senior member of the Board of Revenue and a member of the Viceroy's Council, stated a few years before that "the conclusion to be drawn is that of the agricultural population a large proportion, say 40 per cent., are insufficiently fed, to say nothing of clothing and housing. They have enough food to support life and to enable them to work, but they have to undergo long fasts, having for a considerable part of the year to satisfy themselves with one full meal in the day." Sir Alfred Lethbridge, K.C.S.I., declared that "in Behar the Districts of Muzafarpur and Sarun and parts of Durbhunga and Chumparan are the worst, and there is an almost constant insufficiency of food." The population of these four districts is ten millions.

One Meal a day the Normal Diet.

It may be asked why so few opinions or reports later than those of ten or twenty years ago, are found to quote from. Simply because, if written, they are no longer published. An obscurantist system has been in full force since the Forward Policy on the frontier became the dream of the Pushful Indian "Imperialist." "An Inquiry into the Economic Condition of the Agricultural and

Obscurantist and "Confidential."

Labouring Classes," instituted in 1887–8 by Lord Dufferin, was printed and circulated as "confidential"! It was not till 1891, after being once refused, that it was laid before the House of Commons, and even then the volume relating to Madras was withheld. The "Imperialist" Party want money, and not the opinions and protests of mere Civilian Administrators. The day was when in the writing of thoughtful, well-considered, and detailed reports lay the surest road to high preferment. All that is now changed, and the recent orders of that arch-"Imperialist" Lord Curzon, by which anything but the meagrest notes is condemned, have finally closed the door to public information. The bureaucrat rules supreme in India, and enforces silence on all. The only evidence we have that the condition of agricultural India has not recently improved, and an honest man can ask no better, is that famine is more widespread than ever, and the land revenue is being steadily enhanced. We know this much. Lord Curzon will take care that no official, however high placed, dare attribute starvation to anything but the failure of rain.[1] Like Mr. Chamberlain, whose characteristics he shares in a large degree, he would do doubt regard it as unpatriotic and certainly as officially criminal, to express anything but the Government theory of things.

Grievous as is the question of South Africa with the enormous outlay it has involved, serious as is the future of China and the great trade possibili-

[1] When I wrote this sentence the Hon. Mr. Donald Smeaton had not been "Stellenbosched" for doing exactly this thing. See pages 41–3.

ties of England in that country, tenfold more important is the condition of India. It is rapidly becoming a land steeped in perennial poverty, and unless some strong and early steps are taken, the English people will find itself face to face with annual famines, due chiefly to the exactions of the State, to the oppression of the poor by the "Imperialist Empire-Builder." The taxation on Indian landlords and on the Indian tenantry must be radically overhauled and greatly reduced. The evil is fortunately at present confined in its worst form to Southern and Central India, to Bombay, Madras, and the Central Provinces. But the pressure of the land revenue is severe in the North-Western Provinces, in Oudh, and in the Punjab. In spite of bad seasons and bad rainfall they have up to now suffered from true famine only over small areas. Mortality from starvation also has been low. There are not wanting, however, many signs that impoverishment, pauperisation in fact, has made much progress. Let us be warned in time by the example of Bombay. Space permits me to make only a single quotation to prove this fact. Mr. S. S. Thorburn, recently Revenue Commissioner of the Punjab Province, in 1891, under the orders of his Government, carried out a house-to-house investigation of the condition of the peasantry in "four tracts or circles covering an area of about one thousand square miles and supporting an agricultural population of 300,000 souls in 535 villages." His conclusion was that "in the four selected circles quite half the old agriculturalists are already *ruined beyond redemption* in

"Ruined beyond Redemption."

126 villages," their farms having passed into the hands of money-lenders, whom he asserted "*our system* is making the masters of the village community." "*Borrowing to pay land revenue*" Mr. Thorburn places in the forefront as the primary cause of the farmers seeking the aid of the money-lenders. So severe is the drain of the land-tax that it leaves the tenantry without capital to carry on farming, and the second cause assigned by Mr. Thorburn for borrowing is to obtain the means to buy seed grain!

Nakedness and Starvation.

I could quote many equally authoritative opinions regarding "the thin line which divides large masses of people" (in Oudh and the North-Western Provinces) "from absolute nakedness and starvation." Is it or is it not the duty of a patriotic Englishman to try to get at the bottom of this pitiable state of things and seek for a remedy, though that remedy may involve a great reduction of land revenue? Even the least polemically minded of men see reason to believe that the administration of the War Office was largely to blame for failure in South Africa. May it not be the part of an intelligent citizen to inquire whether the policy of the India Office is quite guiltless in face of disaster in Bombay?

THE PILING UP OF TAX ON TAX' A TRAGEDY

IT may be reasonably asked: What has Lord Curzon done in connection with land taxation that he should be blamed? He did nothing, but he wrote a great deal in defence of it. Perhaps he thought that it would never do if the memorial of the distinguished Indian officials I have quoted were to go forth uncontradicted. There is a good strong dash of Jingoism in every Briton, but there is a stronger element of sound humanity in our race and if the truth reached the English people no amount of beating of the Jingo drum would prevent them from insisting on financial reform. It was essential to engineer a prosperity boom, however unjustified, and so, especially during the past two years, the Tory Press, and often, through ignorance, the Liberal Press, have been going into ecstasies over the "wealth of India," as proved by her great "surplus revenue." Lord Curzon it is, who has, in his minutes and budgets, supplied the material for these mis-statements. It is necessary, therefore, to further study how this "abounding" revenue has been arrived at and what it really means.

Lord Curzon as the Protagonist of Taxation.

In the debate on the budget in Calcutta last March,

the Hon. Donald Smeaton in his speech in the Legislative Council said:—

"A very Vital Question."

"According to the Accounts of 1900–91 over sixty lakhs of land revenue and rates were realised from Bombay, the Punjab and Madras in excess of the collections of 1899–1900, the year of famine, and these sixty lakhs were largely arrears in provinces where there had been either famine or deficient rainfall—arrears which apparently *should not have been demanded at all.* And this brings to my mind a very vital question lately raised, whether the *intensity* of recent famines is, or is not, *largely due* to poverty caused by the operation of our land revenue system as a whole?"

This means that the surplus was in large part obtained by a procedure, which it is very difficult to condemn in temperate language. An immense sum of money, which had accumulated as arrears of land revenue—the 55 per cent. income-tax—during a period of severe famine and plague, was ruthlessly extorted in the year following the famine, in addition to the excessive current land revenue. This is exactly the procedure, which in Madras in the years following the famine of 1877 caused ruin to nearly a million families. To describe revenue so obtained as an evidence of wealth is to say the thing that is not, and Lord Curzon's Government must bear the blame of throwing dust in the eyes of the English people.

The Extortion of the Famine Arrears.

I beg your Lordship will pardon me a short digression. It is only to tell you the reward that Lord Curzon had in store for the Hon. Mr. Smeaton.

The Failure of Lord Curzon

In May last the term of office of Sir Frederick Fryer, Lieut.-Governor of Burmah, came to an end, and public opinion nominated Mr. Smeaton, who had served in that province for twenty years, as his successor. The only way to jockey this distinguished public servant out of his rights was to give Sir Frederick Fryer an extension of office, so as to keep Mr. Smeaton out beyond the period of thirty-five years' service, after which an Indian civil servant is bound by a stringent rule to retire. Lord Curzon is alleged to have stooped to this device, a mean ungrateful device, to injure a man who had served his country so long.

How to Reward Honesty.

The *Pioneer*, discussing the question of the succession to the Lieut.-Governorship, writes:—

"Fair Play and Public Interest" Disregarded.

"It is also known that the Burmah public have long ago given their vote in favour of one of these candidates, who has for years been identified with the Province. Mr. Donald Smeaton, the Financial Commissioner, has twice officiated as Chief Commissioner, and he has represented Burmah on the Supreme Legislative Council for four years. Moreover, Mr. Smeaton's thirty-five years end next November, so that, failing his succession to Sir Frederick Fryer in May next, his services will be lost altogether to the Province. The fact that in the Supreme Council Mr. Smeaton has always given his opinion fearlessly and independently ought to have told in his favour rather than against him. A Province requires a Governor who will frankly give his views regarding what is required in its best interests, even if these views do not happen to

harmonise with those of the higher powers. In all the circumstances of the case the extension of Sir Frederick Fryer's tenure of office just long enough to make it impossible for Mr. Smeaton to come into competition for the succession, is apt to raise doubts whether in this instance considerations of fair play, the public interest, and the opinion of the Province chiefly concerned have been given due weight."

In such language does a most Conservative journal stigmatise conduct which it is charity to describe as unworthy of the Representative of the Emperor of India.

Sir Frederick Fryer got his extension and Lord Curzon, with entire disregard of the claims of the most experienced and trusted of Burmah officials, appointed Mr. H. Barnes, the Foreign Secretary, to be Lieut.-Governor. Mr. Barnes is an admirable official in his line, and has done excellent political service on the Afghan frontier, but has never served one day in Burmah, which lies a couple of thousand miles away from the scenes where his official life has been spent.

An L.-G. Without One Day's Experience.

The displacement of honest, experienced officials is one of the fine arts of "Imperialism." I will have to show later on how Sir Henry Cotton, K.C.S.I., the Chief Commissioner of Assam, lost the Lieut.-Governorship of Bengal for honestly drawing the attention of the Viceroy to the underpayment of coolies on the tea gardens in Assam. Not many years ago, but before Lord Curzon's time, it was a matter of open know-

"Unsafe Men."

ledge that Sir A. MacKenzie was passed over for the same appointment, because, as Chief Commissioner of Burmah, he had strongly protested against the policy of the Government of India in regard to opium shops, which he considered led to their increase in his jurisdiction. No official can hope for high preferment in India and at the same time criticise even in the most moderate manner the policy of the Supreme Government. He becomes at once what is known as an "unsafe man."

Mr. Smeaton was not alone in pointing out that the surplus revenue of last year was no evidence of Indian wealth. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale, the member for Bombay in the Legislative Council, began his speech in these words:—

"A Double Wrong."

"Your Excellency,—I fear I cannot conscientiously join in the congratulations which have been offered to the Hon. Finance Member on the huge surplus which the revised estimates show for last year. A surplus of seven crores of rupees is perfectly unprecedented in the history of Indian finance, and coming, as it does, on the top of a series of similar surpluses realised when the country has been admittedly passing through very trying times, it illustrates, to my mind, in a painfully clear manner the utter absence of a due correspondence between the condition of the people and the condition of the finances of the country. Indeed, my Lord, the more I think about this matter the more I feel, and I trust your Lordship will pardon me for speaking somewhat bluntly, that these surpluses constitute a double wrong to the community. They are a wrong in the first instance in that they exist at all—that Govern-

ment should take so much more from the people than is needed in times of serious depression and suffering; and they are also a wrong, because they lend themselves to easy misinterpretation, and, among other things, render possible the phenomenal optimism of the Secretary of State for India."

Coinage Restriction not Prosperity.

Mr. Gokhale then proceeded to show that it is not prosperity but currency laws, protecting the value of silver coin from the effects of over-production of bullion in America, that yield these surpluses. "A slight examination of these surpluses suffices to show that they are mainly, almost entirely, currency surpluses—resulting from the fact that Government still maintains the same high level of taxation which they considered to be necessary to secure financial equilibrium when the rupee stood at its lowest. Now we all know that a rise of 3d. in the exchange value of the rupee—from 13d. to 16d.—means a saving of between four and five crores of rupees to the Government of India on their Home charges alone, and I think this fact is sufficient by itself to explain the huge surpluses of the last four or five years."

"The Piling up of Tax on Tax."

The vaunted surpluses are due not to prosperity but to the enhanced value of the rupee, whilst taxation is maintained at the high rate necessary before the recent quinquennium of famine in order to meet a depreciated currency. There is no prosperity, but an excessive merciless taxation, which takes from the miserable peasantry three-fifths of the profit of their fields, besides laying heavy burdens on the salt and sugar and fish they eat, on the cotton they

wear, on the oil they burn, and 5 per cent. on every article of European manufacture they use, umbrellas, knives, lamps, brass for their utensils and iron for their ploughs. Such "prosperity" was never seen in the world. All the above-mentioned taxation is new, being imposed during the past sixteen years. "Such continuous piling up of tax on tax," cried Mr. Gokhale, "and such ceaseless adding to the burdens of a suffering people is probably without precedent in the annals of finance." I may here mention that it has recently come to my notice that Sir William Hunter, the distinguished Indian historian, when a member of the Viceroy's Council in 1879, declared that "the Government assessment does not leave enough food to the cultivator to support himself and his family throughout the year."

An Increase of 30,000 Men in the Army.

The need of this taxation began eighteen years ago, in 1885, by an increase in the strength of the army by 30,000 men, in spite of the protests of two out of the five members of the Viceroy's Council, one being the then Finance Member. How just their protest was is proved by the fact that the great Army Commission of 1879, under the presidency of Sir Ashley Eden, had declared the then army amply strong to repel any aggression by Russia, even "with Afghanistan as her ally."

How the current revenue is spent was explained with unconscious candour by Sir Edward Law, the present Finance Minister, in his budget statement last March.

"It must be remembered," he wrote, "that India is

defraying from revenues the cost of undertaking both re-armament and the reform of military reorganisation in important departments. I believe that this is an undertaking which has not been attempted by other countries without the assistance of loans in some form or other. Even in England extraordinary military requirements for fortifications and barracks have been met by loans for short terms of years, repayable by instalments out of revenues. If, profiting by a period of political tranquillity, we can accomplish this task without the raising of a loan and the imposition of a permanent burden on future generations, I think that we shall be able to congratulate ourselves on having done that which even the richest nations of Europe have not considered it advisable to attempt."

"The Richest Nations" Surpassed.

The taxation of one of the poorest nations on earth is kept up to concert pitch in order to re-arm and equip an army beyond the needs of India in a manner the richest nations of Europe would be ashamed to attempt. I am sure Sir Edward Law is quite unconscious of the sufferings, the starvation, that result from his budgets. It is typical of the topsyturvydom of "Imperialism" in India that this very capable gentleman had not one day's experience of an Empire so vast when he undertook to administer her finances.

Blundering into Truth.

It may be alleged that the present Indian army is not in excess of Indian requirements. The London *Standard* disposed of this assertion with succinct clearness a few months ago. "Ladysmith," it wrote, "we should

remember, was defended mainly by regiments which had been embarked in India. It was an Indian general, commanding native troops from India, who relieved the Legations at Peking; and it was from native regiments that our Chinese contingent of occupation was supplied. Since the beginning of the war in South Africa more than 13,000 British officers and men had been sent to that country from India, and they were accompanied by over 9,000 natives, principally followers and attendants. To China there were forwarded from India 1,300 British officers and men, some 20,000 native troops, and 17,500 native followers. *Such is the scale* on which India, at the shortest notice, and *without dislocating* her establishments, can contribute towards the military capabilities of the Empire *beyond her own frontiers.*"

That is just it. India, starving India, is being used to feed, train, and equip great bodies of troops for employment outside India. Excellent *Standard!* One has only to lie in wait for your Jingo journalist, and forthwith you have him on toast. He never intentionally studies accuracy, but he often blunders into downright truth.

I would beg to draw special attention to one of the results of recent taxation. During the past twenty years there has been a great revival of the cotton industry in Bombay, and scores of mills have sprung up in the Western Presidency. Their ruins will probably form a monument to Lord Curzon's neglect to relieve them from the taxation that is killing them. The Hon. Mr. Moses, a Government-appointed and European member of the Legislative Council, early in 1902

The Ruin of a Great Industry.

stated in the Bombay Chamber of Commerce that no less than fourteen mills have recently gone into liquidation, some of them, "brand new ones," being sold at auction for a third of their original cost. Mr. Moses plainly stated that this important and most promising industry had been "brought to the brink of bankruptcy" in consequence of recent taxation.

Since then six more mills have passed into the liquidators' hands, and only three out of 163 mills paid any dividend last year. Ten million sterling, mostly owned by native shareholders, are invested in this industry. In its prosperous days, not very long ago, nearly two millions of people derived their maintenance from the manufacture of cotton in the Bombay Presidency. As the mills close their doors, this large population is being driven back on the land and to agricultural employment, which has for years been synonymous with famine. A European merchant, with the approval of the great commercial community of Bombay, lays the blame of this state of things on Government, or, in other words, on the Viceroy, Lord Curzon. The taxation-ruined industrial labourer must now strive to take his scanty bread from the peasant, whom tax-created famine and poverty-created plague have made the object of world-wide pity.

Taxation the Destroyer.

The orgie of military expenditure in recent years in England was bound to have its echo in India, and it has been received with as little content in Anglo-Indian as in native circles. It was suddenly announced a year ago that a large demand would be made on the Indian

The Bleeding of an unrepresented People.

Exchequer, but I had better simply quote *Capital*, the organ of European commerce in Calcutta.

"It seems," that very capable journal remarked, "that the Home Government proposed to foist upon the Indian people a charge of £786,000 (Rs. 1,17,90,000) in the shape of additional pay to the British soldiers stationed in this country. This increase of pay has been the outcome of the war in South Africa, where troops from India saved the situation in Natal in the early part of the conflict—a conflict with which the Indian people had nothing whatever to do, and in a country, too, where the natives of this Empire are denied the full rights of citizenship, and where a Hindu has actually been fined for walking on the pavement. The Indian Government should resist this impost tooth and nail." The Indian Government has no teeth or nails except for the native taxpayer.

"There is another charge," *Capital* continued, "that is to be hung round our necks, if Lord Curzon's Government is weak enough to submit to it, viz., a sum of £548,000 (Rs. 82,20,000), being £7 10s. for each soldier sent to India as the cost price of recruiting and training him. A more unjust imposition could not be made, and it is one which could only be thrust upon a people having no representative institution. The British Army is raised at home for Imperial purposes. The troops are liable to be sent anywhere. A regiment may have seen years of service in other parts of Greater Britain before it comes to India, and yet it is proposed to charge the original recruiting and train-

ing charges of the soldiers to the Indian Exchequer. The whole thing is ridiculous," and shameless.

Thus an amount of money almost equal to the total land revenue of Bombay has been added to the Military Budget of India by two strokes of the pen without the Government, far less the people of India, being consulted. There is, however, nothing new in this procedure. The *Pioneer*, in protesting against this discourteous and cavalier manner of treating the Indian Government, writes "past experience" shows that this treatment is habitual. "There is an interesting enclosure in a despatch sent Home by the Government of India in 1890, 'showing the annual charges and certain initial charges which have been imposed upon Indian revenues in consequence of orders by the War Office, issued in all cases without the concurrence of the Government of India, and in some cases without that of the Secretary of State having been previously obtained.' The statement shows somewhere about one million sterling added in this way to the Indian Budget between 1864 and 1894."

Lord Curzon Ignored.

Lord Curzon, the unfaithful steward of the Indian people, "is weak enough to submit" to this impost being hung round their necks. He might resign if his action with regard to the Ninth Lancers were disapproved by the Home Government, but his *amour propre* does not suffer in the least when extra and intolerable burdens are imposed on the unhappy people committed to his care, without his being shown the poor courtesy of being asked if they can bear them. *Væ, Væ victis.*

'Weak enough."

THE UPROOTING OF SELF-GOVERNMENT—A FIASCO

THAT Lord Curzon is a man of varied intellectual gifts is beyond question. His University career was a brilliant one and he, no doubt, brought away with him very much of the useless knowledge, unpractical culture, and intellectual vanity that distinguish so many Balliol graduates. In the ways of business men he was and is a child. Quick, eager, and highly intelligent, he is without that kindly patience, that tactful art of give and take, which is the root of all successful statesmanship. With the training of a scholar it was at least to be expected that he would have a sincere sympathy with men of education, though in his eyes their education was infinitely inferior to his own. Yet it was the best in India, and that is a fact which he should not have overlooked.

Want of Sympathy.

Down to about a quarter of a century ago the educated natives of India, the M.A.'s and B.A.'s of the very presentable Universities of Calcutta and Bombay, had practically no voice in government, even in municipal administration. A few Indians were, no doubt, appointed to councils and boards, but they

Educated Indians and Self-Government.

were rarely selected by Government for their education or ability, but for their social position and especially for their "reliability," their readiness to support the powers that be in all things. This state of things was at the time necessary, and I have no desire to criticise it or indeed to withhold approval. The day of representative institutions had not arrived and autocratic methods were, beyond question, the sole possible system in India. Still it was according to English ideals a transition state.

The Success of an Indian Corporation.

The change came in 1876, when Lord Northbrook was Viceroy, and the Legislature passed a law, which entrusted the Municipal administration of Calcutta to a Corporation of 75 members, two-thirds or 50 of whom were elected by the ratepayers and one-third nominated by the local Government. The Chairman, who has always been a member of the Indian Civil Service, and usually a very senior and distinguished representative of that highly-trained and highly-educated body, was also appointed by Government. It is not pretended that the new administration was perfect, or that its reforms were radical, but it did much good work. In consequence of European complaints, Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry in 1884, which, whilst pointing out many shortcomings, admitted much progress. As evidence of substantial advance three facts may be mentioned. This Government Commission, presided over by the Hon. Mr. Beverley, a Judge of the High Court, found that (i.) the length of sewers had extended between 1876 and 1884, that is, in eight short years, from 86 miles to

187 miles, and (ii.) the supply of water to the town had increased from 6½ millions of gallons a day to 20 millions of gallons, seven-eighths of which were filtered water, whilst (iii.) gas-lamps had increased from 2,718 to 4,488 in number.

The new Municipality, though needing legitimate criticism and advice, had proved its right to survive, and its sturdiest defender was its Government-appointed Chairman, Sir Henry Harrison. Things went on in their old way again for many years till the ravages of plague in Bombay about 1898 not unnaturally started a scare in Calcutta. The European merchants saw their commerce threatened by what seemed to them ruin. I for one entirely sympathised with them. If the markets of Europe were closed against their plague-infected exports, it would be a more than serious outlook for most of them. A few sporadic cases of plague in Calcutta added to the terror. The local English Press nearly lost its head, but the local Government kept cool in a very trying time. The newspapers teamed with excited articles and hysterical letters, describing the insanitary condition of native premises, and the Lieut.-Governor was urgent in his warnings to the Corporation. This body at first took the well-meant advice in good part, and large sums of money were cheerfully voted and rapidly expended in cleansing the town.

The Plague Scare.

Unfortunately a time came when the Government lost its patience and the Municipal Commissioners lost their temper. At the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of some new drainage works, the Lieut.-

Governor, Sir Alexander MacKenzie, who had been asked in recognition of his high office to perform this honorific task, went for the Commissioners, in a slashing speech, which roused extreme bitterness. His entertainers, who had just presented him with a loyal and complimentary address in a handsome casket, were told that their city was "a disgrace to the Empire," and that, whereas English town councils were made up of "shrewd, capable men of business," the municipal body in Calcutta talked instead of working, whilst, *horribile dictu*, he broadly hinted there were far too many lawyers amongst them, "whose individual stake in the town is small." He quite forgot that these lawyers were the representatives of the great native landlords and merchants, who, as in England, rarely appear in person on vestry boards. But for the unfittingness of the occasion and the personalities the lecture might have done good, but these were things not to be borne. The Commissioners, in meeting assembled, gave vent to their wrath, their "respectful but emphatic protest" against a speech, "involving a grave misapprehension of the facts." The offence was all the greater in their eyes as they had in former days held up Sir Alexander MacKenzie as a model official, and he had in truth been one of the best friends of the natives of India who had ever visited its shores, though rather "short" with them in his latter years of ill-health. He had also shown in the outset of his speech that he was quite cognisant of the good work done by the Corporation.

A Speech and its Consequences.

"I have elsewhere sought," he said, "to vindicate the Commissioners from the charge of having dealt inadequately and perfunctorily with this drainage question. There has been delay, no doubt, in prosecuting these extensions of the system, but the delays have not, as was thought, been inordinate, and the wisdom of caution in undertaking such costly and gigantic operations is vindicated by a comparison between the original estimates and those of the scheme as now sanctioned. The Municipality has, I am afraid, many shortcomings to answer for. But I must say this, that I have never been able to agree that it has shown niggardliness, or been backward in sanctioning money for either water-supply or drainage."

Money Freely Given.

They had raised in loans in eighteen years for improvements as much as 110 lakhs of rupees, a vast sum in a very poor country like India. It was really the executive under its Government-appointed chairmen that had failed. Not that I mean to blame any of the very capable men who have held this office. They had done their best, but the task of immediately introducing modern sanitation into a populous, very extended, and far from affluent Eastern city, is one that is practically impossible, unless at an outlay that is a hundredfold prohibitive. The thing will probably be done within the present century, but such a task takes time as well as money. Was it not the other day that a great medical authority described the "homes of the poor in the East End of London" as "less comfortable and less healthy than the lair

The Difficulties of Sanitation.

of a wild beast?" "In the Metropolis of the world," he wrote "tens of thousands" of Englishmen and women live in "pestilent human rookeries," in "courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases," in rooms approached by "dark and filthy passages, swarming with vermin," in "dens of intolerable stench" in which "the sickly air" is polluted by deadly exhalations from "the putrifying carcasses of animals or viler abominations still." A horrible picture, but neither the King nor the Prime Minister have placed the blame exclusively on the shoulders of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London.

New Legislation and New Governors.

It may be asked, Where does Lord Curzon come into this quarrel? I hasten to state. When Sir Alexander MacKenzie was "answered back" by the Calcutta town Commissioners he at once had recourse to the big stick, with which an Indian Governor always punishes the recalcitrant. He proceeded to make a new law for the clipping of municipal wings. One of the greatest weaknesses of Indian administration is the facility of legislation. Reform is a grand thing, but when a Lieut.-Governor has simply to draft a new enactment and send it to a Legislative Council, as it is called, made up of his own nominees, there is grave danger of scamped and hasty work. I do not say that this remark applied to the new Municipal Bill. There is no doubt that the Corporation would have been none the worse for a little tightening up. It has been said that English town councillors often need such tonics. In Calcutta it is absolutely true that the executive was urgently in want of wider and stronger

powers to deal with insanitary conditions. The new legislation, which had Lord Elgin's full support, gave these powers, but did not interfere with the constitution of the Corporation. Before the Bill could develop into a permanent enactment there was a change of Viceroys, and Lord Curzon succeeded Lord Elgin. Sir Alexander MacKenzie also had to retire through ill-health, and his place as Lieut.-Governor was taken by Sir John Woodburn, an able, just, and tactful man, beloved of all classes, who at once proceeded to carry out the wise policy of Lord Elgin, which maintained unimpaired the representative character of the Town Council.

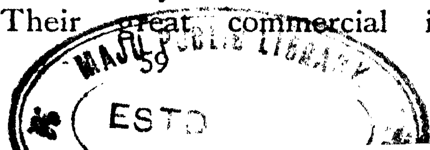
The Uprooting of Self-Government.

A new Viceroy of ordinary good feeling and intellectual modesty would have hesitated before interfering with legislation, which had been fully thought out and laid down by his predecessor. An "Imperialist" rarely has these qualities. So Lord Curzon immediately set to work to uproot the principles of self-government, which had been developed and matured by Lords Northbrook, Dufferin, and Elgin, and by half a dozen strong and capable Lieut.-Governors. Still worse, he did not hesitate to introduce the racial difficulty in all its animosity. The Jingo is always pre-eminent in creating bad blood. The Municipal Council of Calcutta had continued since 1876 to consist of 75 members, 50 of whom were elected and therefore representative, the remaining 25 being Government nominees. The former were mostly Indians, the latter mostly Europeans. By a stroke of his pen Lord Curzon reduced the representative

members to 25 and destroyed representative government in the capital of India. The official chairman's casting vote permanently gives the majority to the official or European or English element. The resultant bad language in the native Press requires a stringent Press law to keep its racial denunciations in order. So folly begets evil. Twenty-eight Indian members of the Corporation immediately resigned, and these men were the representatives of the wealth of Calcutta, which, so far as its landlords go, is practically a Hindu town. They were also mostly men of authority and education, honourable members of the Bengal Legislative Council, graduates of the English Universities, leading barristers and doctors, the most prominent men of Asiatic blood in Calcutta. The bland "Imperialist" quite expects that these gentlemen, who made no secret of the fact that they felt themselves outraged, should be exuberantly loyal. They are loyal, but look forward to a day when Lord Curzon's mischievous Indian career is at an end before they trouble the Viceroy with further expressions of their loyalty. The King would get them in an overflowing tide if he should ever visit India ; so would any Prince of the Royal Family.

Lord Curzon's "Reform" an Utter Fiasco.

It may naturally be asked whether success has attended Lord Curzon's policy of administering Calcutta without the support of its leading citizens. I may mention that the principal European merchants and non-officials have always eschewed municipal boards. They have respectfully but firmly declined nomination by Government. Their great commercial interests



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demand all their time. They are birds of passage and own little property in Calcutta. Who will blame them if they devote all their attention to "business" and hasten to enjoy their hard-earned fortunes in a climate more congenial to Europeans than Bengal? They think they have performed their whole municipal duty when they emit an odd grumble at inefficiency in their favourite journals. These representatives of Western opinion in Calcutta have been growling more than ordinarily of late and their theme is, alas! the shortcomings of Lord Curzon's emasculated corporation. The foremost organ of Europeans in Calcutta is the *Englishman*, an unquestionably high class and capable newspaper, though ultra-Tory in its views of things Indian. On the 24th of last July (1902) it published an article, from which the following passages are extracts:—

A Noisome City given over to "Culpable Neglect."

"The last annual report of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation showed a most satisfactory state of affairs. All the things that had been done during the year were duly set forth, if not with a flourish of trumpets, at least with a very audible note of triumph, at great works accomplished. But the worst of annual reports is that they rather lay stress on what has been done than on what has been left undone. There is a very big speck in the sun of the Calcutta Corporation. If it lays out public parks and erects wash-houses on the one hand, on the other hand it neglects the work of conservancy and drainage in a manner that is *scandalous*. The European community of Calcutta is too apt to consider that the state of the wards in which it lives is typical

of the whole town. But European Calcutta forms but a very small section of the city. Those who are inclined to think that the Municipality is doing fairly well, should pay a visit to certain wards outside their own. At the present moment we would draw attention to the locality loosely known as Bhowanipur. It is by no means as bad as some wards that might be named, but it is bad enough to reflect the *greatest discredit* on the whole municipal body. Those using the electric tramway to Kalighat may catch fleeting glimpses of open and noisome drains and tanks covered with floating scum of the filthiest description. Occasionally their nostrils are assailed by odours that may herald every description of zymotic disease. But in order to see the locality in all its hideousness it behoves one to alight at Kansaripara Road and make a short tour among the lanes and streets to the eastward. Frequent and bitter complaints from the residents of this locality having reached us, a representative of the *Englishman* was deputed to make an investigation. What is stated here, therefore, is the result of personal inquiry. Not only is it not exaggerated, but many details have been omitted as being impossible to print. The very first thing that strikes an observer is that at some time or other the locality has been properly surveyed and drained." (Query by the Native Commissioners, ejected by Lord Curzon.) " Masonry drains run through every street, and have apparently a natural outfall. It is not, therefore, a question of either an immense outlay of money or of insuperable physical difficulties. There are no physical difficulties in the way and the out-

lay of money apparently has already been made. *What is in evidence is the most culpable neglect.*

"The locality of which we are speaking is bounded on the north-west by the new Presidency General Hospital. The hospital has been built on the most modern lines. No expense has been spared. It is idle for the local Government to spend its money freely in building a hospital, if the locality is left by the Municipality to breed disease. And, as we have said, it is not a question of money. It is merely a question of energy. The drains are there. They only need to be properly cleansed. A few thousand rupees and a few score men would do the business in a week. Thereafter a very small establishment, if properly supervised, would suffice to keep the drains in order." Again, it is the Municipal executive and not the Council-men who are at fault.

The Surroundings of an Hospital.

Capital is, as I have stated before, the principal commercial journal of Calcutta and absolutely English in every respect. In last June it wrote:—

"Confusion Worse Confounded."

"The plain truth is that the administration of the Calcutta Municipality is confusion worse confounded, because we have not a responsible business man at the head. As a consequence the executive is needlessly worried, work is needlessly piled up, and every one is dissatisfied.

"Now this is not a healthy state of affairs. It is certainly not in the interests of this City that it should continue. Our information is that most of the departments of the Municipality are a seething mass of dissatisfaction and discontent."

The native Press is equally outspoken. One journal sums up the position in these words :—

"Seething Discontent."

"That the feeling against the Corporation is very bitter, is a stubborn fact; and we state it not to bring any opprobrium upon that body. The general impression is that the Corporation was placed in the hands of the European Commissioners, so that they might lord it over the Indian ratepayers and fill the Municipality with European and Eurasian employés. This impression may or may not have any foundation in fact; but there is no doubt of it that the vagaries and high-handed proceedings of the Corporation have created alarm and consternation, and it is seething discontent from one end of the town to the other."

It cannot be said that this is a satisfactory state of things after a three years' trial of the new administration, and whom have we to thank for playing the mischief with the affairs of a Capital City of a million inhabitants? It cannot be the natives, on whom blame is so readily thrown, if it is at all possible to do so. They have been extruded from the management of their own town, with which they were so intimately acquainted. Or is it the meddlesome Viceroy, who, after a bare three months in India, contrary to the advice of his experienced predecessor, Lord Elgin, set to work to harass the wealthiest and most progressive inhabitants of Calcutta? His expectations of reform have been as "dismally belied" as were his pronouncements on Persian railways after a "six months' journey to the country concerned."

The Most Ill-balanced Mind.

Impatient or neglectful of advice, short-sighted and impetuous, Lord Curzon's cleverness only leads him into a morass of failure. Yet it is extremely probable one of these days, if the Conservatives continue in power, that the most active and ill-balanced mind now in the service of the State may be chosen to guide the affairs of our vast empire in some great department of administration, War or Foreign Affairs.

THE UPROOTING OF POPULAR EDUCATION—A FAILURE

THE destruction of Municipal Self-Government was the initial *bêtise* of Lord Curzon's Indian career. The latest display of his worritting activity has been quite as fatal to the good relations of Government with the educated classes of India. One of His Excellency's idiosyncrasies is that he thinks himself quite fitted to be an Educational Reformer. It is a common weakness of your high and dry Tory, with a wide knowledge of ancient literature and a narrow acquaintance with the modern conditions of progress. The educational system of India has been the slow growth of a century of careful development by good and great men, by pious scholars like Duff and real statesmen like Canning. The amusing egotist, who now governs India, immediately dashed to the opinion that in education as in municipal administration his great predecessors were quite backward folk and that the educational millennium was only awaiting the advent of a certain superior person. The far-fetched idea that got into his unstable head is summarised and rejected in a few words in a leading article in the *Pioneer* of the 8th of August of last year, and it must

A far-fetched Idea.

be remembered that this very capable journal is generally so pro-Government as to be practically the organ and often the mouthpiece of the Viceroy. "Lord Curzon's ideal," it wrote, "seems to be to bring the Indian University into line with the system at Oxford and Cambridge. This is an idea, which is alluring to all Englishmen, but it is *quite impracticable* in the present stage of education in India, even if it were really desirable—a very wide question. Colleges *cannot be rooted out* of the localities, in which they have grown and from which they have drawn their support, and be planted down hundreds of miles away round a University. The absence of means alone is sufficient argument against this scheme." "Rooted out" are very significant words, but they are the only effective description of the Viceroy's attempt to destroy the indigenous colleges that have grown up all over India in nearly every big town.

Lord Curzon's procedure was thiswise: He made a clever speech, based on a very imperfect knowledge of his subject and indicating various crude views. He then appointed a commission of inquiry, consisting of seven members, five being Europeans, mostly officials from the entourage of the Viceroy, one Musulman—a nobody—and one Hindu of distinction. This unrepresentative body in due course produced a majority report, which, considering its constitution, was naturally only a lengthy exposition of Lord Curzon's expressed ideas and utterly subversive of the existing system of higher education in India. How intense was the indignation aroused amongst the progressive section of Indians it

Intense Indignation.

would be difficult to exaggerate. I give the words of three men of distinction, who have all been chosen by Government at different times to be members of the Legislative Councils. The Hon. Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarcar, the foremost native scientist in India and the most senior member of the Senate of the Calcutta University, uses language that must appeal to every right-minded Englishman. There is downright pathos in the old man's words:—

"Striking at the root of Education."

"I have told you," he said, "often and often that we are enjoying under the rule of this nation more liberty, more freedom of thought and action, than we ever enjoyed under our own. But alas! that I should live to see this liberty ominously being threatened in a matter, which has been the greatest blessing under British rule. Without imputing any motives to anybody, I cannot but observe, and it breaks my heart to do so, that the recommendations of the Commission seem to me to strike at the root of general education and to discourage the study of science."

The Hon. Raja Piari Mohan Mukherjea, the chairman of a great meeting of protest at the Calcutta Town Hall, remarked:—

"To Narrow the Popular Basis."

"All that I desire to say is that the recommendations of the Commission being admittedly such as to greatly narrow the popular basis of high education, it is the duty of every well-wisher of the country to avail himself of all constitutional means to get those recommendations set aside."

The Hon. Norendra Nath Sen, the Editor of the *Indian Mirror*, said: "The matter under discussion

to-day may, without exaggeration, be fitly described as one of life or death to the aspirations and progress of our countrymen. The recommendations of the Universities Commission may spell life to a few, but they mean death to countless aspirants after not only fame and fortune, but for very subsistence. They threaten the existence of more than half the colleges in India."

"A Matter of Life or Death."

It would be easy to quote from a score of Indian journals in condemnation of Lord Curzon's policy. It would be impossible to find even one vernacular journal defending it. I will quote only two. The *Bengali*, which is edited by a most capable educationalist, himself the Principal of a very successful indigenous college, the Hon. Surendra Nath Banerjea, a member also of the Bengal Legislative Council, in very moderate language condemns the crudity of the new policy.

"Revolutionary Proposals."

"If a number of persons," it writes, "deputed to perform an important public duty, had deliberately set themselves to the task of framing revolutionary proposals, they could not have done better or worse than the Universities Commission. With all possible respect for these gentlemen, we are bound to say that they proceeded as if they had a *tabula rasa* upon which they might inscribe anything they pleased. The great middle class of England are wealthy, and can afford the heavy educational expenses of the Public School and of the University. The middle class in India are poor, and for reasons, which it is needless to inquire into, are poorer now than they were fifty years ago. To transplant the English

system into their midst, without reference to existing conditions and the totally different circumstances of the two countries, would be a piece of political unwisdom, which we trust the present rulers of India will permit us not to associate with their names."

New India, an organ of the most educated class, that is, of men who have generally completed their studies in Europe, plainly accuses Lord Curzon of the intention of reducing the number of educated Indians for political reasons.

A Political Motive Suspected.

" Since some time past," it states, " the Government of India has been seeking to do something to check the 'unhealthy over-growth' of University education in India. This education, they think, is a source of political danger. It turns out—the official exponents of this policy have repeatedly said—an army of discontented young men every year. It is creating an army of half-educated, unemployed, and consequently disaffected persons in the country."

New India makes a very important point by showing that the policy of educational starvation would hit not the lower classes as it would in Europe, but the high castes, who supply nineteen-twentieths of the University students in India.

Closing the Door Against the Higher Castes.

" However," it remarks, " we may condemn it and try to break it down, caste is still a potent factor in India; and nothing is likely to create deeper and more widespread discontent than interference, direct or indirect, with the inborn caste sentiment of the people. Education alone will, we think, some day

pull this barrier down. Where the sentiment has already been weakened, it is education that has done it. To close the doors of this education against the people of the higher castes, and to compel them through pressure of economic forces, to seek occupation not in harmony with their caste feelings, would be to sow the seeds of a mighty revolution in the peaceful Indian soil. Let the Government understand this, before they make any attempt to curtail the present educational opportunities of the people."

In this connection I would ask your Lordship to pardon a long quotation from the dissent of the Hon. Justice Guru Das Banerjea, a great lawyer, who has been Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta and the solitary Hindu member of this University Commission, which has been playing ducks and drakes with the educational future of a couple of hundred millions of his co-religionists. The most egregious of the proposals of this body, the one believed to be dearest to Lord Curzon and his retrograde appointees, ran thus :—

The Use of Fees to Choke Education.

"Fees must not be fixed so low as to tempt a poor student of but ordinary ability to follow a University course, which it is not to his real interest to undertake."

I commend this wisdom to Mr. Andrew Carnegie's notice. It is pitiable that it should be left to a native of India to refute it.

"Speaking," wrote Mr. Justice Banerjea, "with all respect, I must say I am wholly unable to accept the reason as sound. Whether it is to the real interest of a poor student of but ordinary ability to follow

a University course, it is for him and for those immediately interested in him to decide. Others may give him proper advice; but no University would be justified in imposing any restriction, such as a prohibitive fee, for the sole purpose of preventing him from entering it, if he satisfies all other ordinary tests of fitness. Youths of ordinary ability are often found to develop considerably their mental powers later and by slow degrees. The principle of excluding students from University education by a fee limit is open to the further objection that it will, on the one hand, exclude not only the undeserving but also the deserving poor students, while, on the other hand, it will fail to exclude the undeserving rich students."

The Exclusion of the Poor Student.

One more quotation and I am done. Speaking at the Town Hall meeting, Moulvi Abul Kasim, B.A., delegate from the Burdwan Muhamadan Association, thus referred to an important aspect of the question :—

"A Death-blow to Muhamadan Progress."

"In the resolution, gentlemen, you call attention to some of the most prominent recommendations of the Commission as being open to the gravest objection. All these recommendations mean in one form or other the closing of the door of high education against the middle classes. If these recommendations would seriously affect the progress of the Hindu boys, they would be ten times more injurious to the Moslem youth. Poverty, you have been told, gentlemen, is no crime, and it is an admitted fact that the Indian Mussulmans are a very poor community; I may warn you, gentlemen, that if these recommendations are

given effect to, it would be a death-blow to the spread of high education among the Mussulmans and to Muhamadan progress in general."

Condemnation could not be more widespread or more vigorous. Mussulmen and Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs, there is no one to say a word of approval for the Balliol-cum-Eton policy of restricting education to the rich, the good old Tory policy of keeping the people in ignorance.

To Make Education Expensive.

There could be no better index of the fatuity of the Government policy, which the Indian people interpret into a deliberate intention to kill the existing seats of education, than a suggested rule that no college should be affiliated to the University unless it was possessed of a chemical laboratory, in all countries a highly expensive adjunct to an educational establishment. Although the University of Cambridge includes as many as seventeen Colleges, only two of these are supplied with a chemical laboratory. Expensive as the institution of a laboratory is, its up-keep is still more so. It is only human that the Bengali Press regard this suggestion as only a minor device in the plan to make education so expensive as to be brought within the reach only of the few and the wealthy.

Lord Curzon climbs down.

I am glad to say that since the foregoing paragraphs were written Lord Curzon has climbed down, an operation which, when performed by a Viceroy, is not as balm of Gilead to a sensitive British subject. Still, it is a pleasure to be able to say that our thoughtless, off-at-a-tangent Satrap has found grace and, it is generally believed,

will do little harm and less good to the cause of education in India. The indigenous colleges will not be destroyed and the fees will not be raised. Lord Curzon's connection with this all-important subject has, in fact, been flighty and weak where it has not been also mischievous. It is impossible for him to ride off on the apology that he is not responsible for the recommendations of the Commission. No one attempts this futile excuse in India, where there is no shirking the fact that the Viceroy had clearly indicated his views and that the five salaried official members did little but reproduce and expand them. Such proceedings sap the loyalty of a conquered people, and the loyalty of the Indian people is a thing worth preserving. It is of that intelligent, practical order that we are striving to instil into the Boer nation. The Indian peoples have long known that it is a good thing to live under the British Crown. I do not think many Englishmen who try to appreciate the facts set out in these pages will be quite satisfied that this healthy loyalty can long survive a few doses of such disorganising statesmanship.

"Let Art and Science—Learning Die."

It would be unjust to conclude this chapter without expressing my own personal belief that Lord Curzon, far from wishing to injure education in India, was filled with the best intentions—paved throughout with them—and glowing with eagerness to raise the Universities of the East to some distant approach to the "superior" culture and exclusiveness of his beloved Balliol.

Let art and science—learning die,
But leave us still our old futility.

THE "IMPERIALIST" AND THE ANCIENT PRINCES OF INDIA—A SAD COMEDY

THE few people in England, who take an interest in such things, were amazed a couple of years ago by the announcement that Lord Curzon had issued an edict to the Native Princes of India, forbidding them to visit Europe without His Excellency's permission! That ukase never saw the light of public print and has, it is believed, been secretly withdrawn, but it also was typical of the spirit, in which Lord Curzon approached his great task, the flightiness, with which he offends great and powerful classes under the influence of some whim, some sudden idea, some ill-conceived, ill-thought-out policy. That pressure should be put, if necessary, on our great feudatories not to withdraw themselves often or for long from their wide and populous dominions, is quite right, but there are certain courtesies usual between grown-up gentlemen One cannot help asking what idea had Lord Curzon of his office, great as it undoubtedly is, that could justify him in requiring puissant princes, like the Maharaja of Gwalior, or the Nizam of Hyderabad, truly the sons of kings, to ask for permission, like schoolboys, before taking a holiday or visiting an

Great Feudatories as Schoolboys.

European surgical specialist. Such conduct is no more calculated to rouse loyalty in high places, than did the knocking of Calcutta Self-Government about their ears awaken gratitude in the minds of some of our most educated fellow-subjects in Bengal.

An "Independent" Chief!

A better evidence of the High and Mighty Policy now in favour is afforded by a document, of which the leading provisions are quoted below. It is rather lengthy, but any curtailment would spoil the picture of the *beau ideal* of an Indian chief, as limned by the master-hand that is now consolidating our Empire in the East!

"Whereas" it runs, "the status and position with reference to the British Government of the Political State of Seraikella in Chota Nagpore has hitherto been undefined and doubts have from time to time arisen with regard thereto, His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council is pleased to grant to you Raja Udit Narain Singh Deo Bahadur the following Sanad with a view to assuring you that the British Government will continue, as long as you remain loyal to the Crown and abide by the conditions of the Sanad and of your other engagements with the British Government, to maintain you in the position and privileges which you have heretofore enjoyed or which are now conferred upon you:—

"SANAD.

"You Raja Udit Narain Singh Deo Bahadur, son of Raja Chakradhar Singh Deo Bahadur, are hereby

formally recognised as the Feudatory Chief of the Seraikella State, and you are *permitted* as heretofore to generally administer the territory of the said Seraikella State, subject to the conditions, hereinafter prescribed. In like manner your heirs and successors shall become entitled to your privileges and liable to your obligations, provided that *no succession shall be valid* until it has been recognised by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council.

"You shall conform in all matters concerning the preservation of law and order and the administration of justice generally within the limits of your State to the instructions, issued from time to time for your guidance by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. You will *appoint such officers and pay them such emoluments* as, on full consideration of the circumstances and of such representations as you may wish to make, may, from time to time appear necessary to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, for the proper hearing of cases and administration of justice in your State.

"You shall levy no tolls or duties of any kind on grain, merchandise, or other articles passing into or out of or through your State without the permission of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

"You shall consult the Commissioner of Chota Nagpur in all important matters of administration, and *comply with his wishes.* The settlement and the collection of the land revenue, the imposition of taxes, the administration of justice, arrangements connected

with excise, salt and opium, *the concession of mining, forest, and other rights*, disputes arising out of any such concession, and disputes in which other States are concerned, shall be regarded as specially important matters, and in respect to them you shall *at all times conform* to such advice as the Commissioners may give you.

"The right to catch elephants in your State is granted to you *as a personal concession and as a matter of favour;* but this concession is liable to withdrawal whenever it may seem desirable either on account of abuse or for other reasons, and it will not be necessarily granted to your successor.

(Signed) "CURZON OF KEDLESTON,
"Viceroy and Governor-General
of India."

An "Altogether Inexpedient" Policy.

The nobleman to whom this "letter of appointment" is addressed is one of the minor feudatories of Chota Nagpur, in East Central India, and is the legitimate heir of chiefs, who held absolutely independent sway centuries before the British conquest of India. There is something ludicrous as well as impolitic in Lord Curzon's supercilious "permission" to this princelet "to generally administer" his own State and property. The policy of interference and control, set out in such detail in this document, is in entire conflict with our policy in the past, and sets at nought our solemn engagements. In a letter, addressed by the Foreign Secretary to the officer, who

was sent in 1818 to settle the affairs of the Chota Nagpur Chiefs, the Government of India observed:—"It is the decided opinion of the Governor-General that any attempt to introduce the direct authority of the British Government into the internal administration of these provinces will be altogether inexpedient, and indeed not quite free from question in point of equity." In the same communication, the Government of India referred to the services which the Chiefs had rendered to the British Government by resisting the invasions of the Mahrattas, and urged that they should be treated with justice and liberality. In 1823 and again in 1875 *sanads* were granted to these chiefs, fully confirming their authority within their States and guaranteeing their ancient independence. Nothing has occurred to justify interference with their old-time rights, nothing except the fact that there are "new conditions" as your "Imperialist" calls them. Their country is being opened up by railways and is known to contain coal, gold, and other minerals in payable quantities. As in South Africa, so in India your Balliol man has his own interpretation of the principle of *sic vos non vobis*.

"Sapping the Foundations of all Confidence."

The following extract from the "seditious" Press of India, discussing Lord Curzon's new departure, shows how much needed is a strict enforcement of the Press Act:—

"Are ancient obligations," writes the *Bengali* of Calcutta, "to be scattered to the winds in the presence of new conditions? To say that they may be disregarded, is to lay down a most

dangerous doctrine, which would sap the confidence of the rulers of Native States in the British Government. The treaties with the great States of Hyderabad, Gwalior, and Baroda were concluded under circumstances, which no longer exist. The condition of things has changed; and are the treaties with these great Feudatories to be disregarded on that account? And if not, we ask why should there be one law for the great Native States and another for the petty States? The policy of the Government in relation to the petty States of Chota Nagpur, as embodied in this *Sanad*, is calculated to sap the foundations of all confidence in the declarations of the Government. We trust, it will be abandoned. The rulers of these States have not shown that they are unequal to cope with the altered conditions. No charges of maladministration have been brought against them. The new policy is absolutely without any justification and is in violation of the recognised policy of the past."

His Highness the Gaikwar of Baroda pursues a related line of argument in a little book, recently published, called "Famine Notes."

"This Policy of Chaperoning."

"It is, however, a pity," he writes, "that the British Government is so fond of centralisation and so strictly compels Native States to ask for its sanction in matters where they ought to be entirely free to make their own arrangements, even if necessary, in concert with other neighbouring Native States. If Native States are to be preserved in all their vitality, it is necessary to give them greater freedom, and

promote in them habits of self-reliance, and to stop this policy of chaperoning done out of mistaken kindness. Some blunders are preferable to imbecility and want of timely decision. The tendency of the British Authorities in their treatment of Native Administrations, in periods of famine, seems at times too assertive of supremacy. This proclivity tends to create a gulf between the native governors and the governed, and all manly interest in the pursuits of good and consistent rule is discouraged.

Mr. Gribble of the Madras Civil Service, in an article in *East and West* last May (1902), is more out-spoken.

"Who is Mainly to Blame?"

"Again," he writes, "it is often said that even in his capital the Native Prince cares for little beyond the luxuries and pleasures of his own palace and zenana, and that he loves best to shut himself up with a case of champagne and a troup of dancing girls. This charge is certainly not correct as a general one, but if it were true, who is mainly to blame? The Prince has no chance of taking a prominent share in the affairs of the world. The *Pax Britannica* prevents him from using his sword. Even in his own dominions, he is scarcely allowed a voice in the Government, and is provided with a Minister, sometimes against his own choice, who does the governing, whilst he has little more to do than to sign the decrees."

The native Prince is a mere figurehead with no real authority, except when he meekly obeys the dictation of the British Resident. There are many highly intelligent men in England, who approve this

form of tutelage, and it may be admitted that there was a time when it was patently necessary, but there is grave political danger in its continuance. There has been a plethora of gush in our newspapers over the presence of the great feudatories at the Delhi Durbar. It may interest some Englishmen, who have not lost the sense of foresight, to learn how educated India regards these high-placed noblemen. The most influential native paper in Calcutta dismisses them with a contemptuous reference to them as "bejewelled and bedecked Princes and Chiefs—poor, sad-hearted, and voiceless souls—playing the gilded automata at the behest of the inevitable Residents and Agents." Is it wise to make these influential men the object of contempt or pity to their fellow-countrymen? I fear we are playing with fire in India all round, and Lord Curzon, with his gewgaws and fanfare, is not the man to see or understand the gravity of the situation.

"Poor, Sad-hearted and Voiceless Souls, Bejewelled and Bedecked."

There is nothing more admirable and nothing more politically wise than the courtesy and hospitality, which the British people and aristocracy extend to Indian noblemen visiting this country. This well-bred treatment makes some amends for pranks such as Lord Curzon played on them at Delhi. I fear many Englishmen overlook what the real relations are between the great feudatories of India and His Majesty the King-Emperor. These princes are by solemn treaties very much more allies than subjects, and, though their high estate has been greatly curtailed, the great gentlemen, who last

Solemn Treaties.

century represented the Sovereign, from Wellesley to Dalhousie and Canning and Mayo and Dufferin, never failed to preserve the recognition of this fact. They did not forget that there was a time when the alliance of the Nizam or the Scindia, the masters of tens of thousands of troops disciplined by French and Italian officers, was a matter of the utmost moment to the British supremacy. Are we to forget that in the grim days of the mutiny no one of these men flinched?

An Almost Intolerable Affront.

The manner of recognising the still semi-independent position of the descendants of the former rulers of India has always been the exchange of State visits, accompanied by salutes of artillery. There is no point on which up to now there has been a more unbending punctilio. With the enormous development of British authority, these compliments are the sole surviving acknowledgment of a proud, even glorious, past. If there were any signs of recalcitrancy against our hegemony, one might understand a change of policy, but the Indian princes are loyal with an exuberance of loyalty the Duke of Norfolk can hardly emulate. On what grounds, then, with what motive did Lord Curzon make use of a great festival of loyalty, held to do homage in a special degree to the King-Emperor, to refuse these visits of high courtesy, these saluting salvoes of well-earned honour, and put an almost intolerable affront on the Princes of India? I do not exaggerate the fact. The language of the Native Press was loud and angry in protest. It was stated that several of the great

feudatories tried hard by various excuses to avoid going to Delhi, and subjecting themselves to such a slight. The feeling was so strong that some explanation had to be attempted. It was urged that the distances were so great between the Delhi camps that His Excellency might overtire himself! Why then was not a representative, the Lieutenant-Governor or the Senior Member of the Supreme Council, sent? The extreme estimate of the area of the land occupied by the Durbar at Delhi was eighty square miles, a space measuring ten by eight miles. Where there is a will there is a way. I was at the Delhi Durbar in 1876, when the title of Empress was assumed by her late Gracious Majesty, and I well remember how the Earl of Lytton performed this tiring duty. Day after day for a week the firing of salutes went on during several hours, whilst the Viceroy received and returned visits. The little State processions went by every half hour, each prince receiving the full honours of his rank. All the show and splendour were not reserved for the glorification of one too prominent individual.

Epicene "Imperialism."

I have so far avoided much reference to the Delhi Durbar itself and its unpardonable waste of public and private money, because, knowing the dire straits of the India of the Millions, I cannot trust myself. It would need the pen of a Juvenal to adequately portray the degradation of English manners involved. Perhaps Rudyard Kipling may find his "Imperial" ideal in the circus cavalcade headed by an English nobleman, dressed "in a sky-blue court uniform" (was it *mousseline de*

soie Pompadour with Imperial purple lace insertion?) and "splendidly mounted on a richly caparisoned elephant, the decorations on whose trappings included figures emblematic of Justice and Plenty." Imagine the keen exhilaration it caused Lord Kitchener to trundle along in such a show, and believe me that these epicene apings of the follies of the Moghul sovereigns in the days of their vicious and shameless decadence are offensive to every intelligent and cleanly minded man, European or Indian. It is a big score to the Nonconformist Missionary Societies in India, Wesleyan and Baptist, that their organs besought their co-religionists to avoid Lord Curzon's Babylonish ceremonies.

Bankruptcy.

A single fact will bring home to your Lordship's mind the real meaning of the whole pagan rout. The last official report on the condition of the state of one of the most prominent feudatories at the Durbar declares that it is temporarily bankrupt, unable to meet its debts—three causes being categorically assigned: (1) the recent famine, (2) the expenses of the Coronation at Westminster, and (3) the still heavier outlay at Delhi. There will be cruel wringing of the peasants' loins—the *misera contribuens plebs*—over many a broad acre in Feudatory India, to pay for peacocking "Imperialism" at Delhi. Lord Curzon's Finance Minister was quite gay in his last budget, when announcing that last year's imports of costly jewellery and precious stones exceeded by fifty-nine lakhs those of the preceding year. Your modern "Imperialist" is built in a truly heroic mould.

An incident of a seemingly personal kind but of

really much political significance has not attracted the notice of the Jingo Press. There was no room in the Viceroy's camp for the Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta, the foremost functionary of the Law in India—of that Law which is the mainstay of Indian loyalty. The Law does not bulk very large in the eyes of the Pushful. Popinjay "Imperialism" naturally preferred to surround itself with a mob of titled sightseers and millionaire foreigners. Lord Curzon forgets that the Indian is a loyal subject because our courts of law give him justice and protection, unless when, as I will show later on, an "Imperialist" Government, in its mad pursuit of revenue to waste on ambitious follies, passes special legislation to oust him from these supreme rights.

The Law as an Outsider.

THE FLOUTING OF EXPERIENCED ADVICE—A BÊTISE

Stultification.

I HAVE pleasure in recognising that in one particular Lord Curzon's policy has undoubtedly been well advised. I refer to his withdrawal of the outlying garrisons on the North-Western Frontier and his evident recognition of the true meaning of the military collapse, known as the Tirah Expedition. But in doing the right thing he cannot leave well enough alone. Having thrown overboard the so-called Forward Policy and its brood of petty tribal wars, he must proceed to stultify himself by destroying the only effective check on "Imperialist" adventure on the frontier. He has formed a new sub-province, which has been withdrawn from the control of the civil government of the Punjab and placed in the hands of a so-called military-civilian, who deals directly with the Supreme Government. To a theorist, like Lord Curzon, this seems a very admirable arrangement, till it is remembered that the Supreme Government is and has always been an "Imperialist" junta, in which the dominating War Party has for a quarter of a century been trying to get rid of the Punjab civil control, but under strong Viceroys like Lords Lansdowne, Dufferin, and Elgin

it hopelessly failed. It is a noticeable fact that up to the present viceroyalty the Finance Member has always been a distinguished civilian, a man of peace. Three years back, however, Sir Clinton Dawkins, the last civilian and now the well-known partner of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, was succeeded by Sir Edward Law, an ex-artillery officer, who, as your Lordship may remember, glories in pouring out the revenues of India on armaments in a reckless fashion "which even the richest nations of Europe have not considered it advisable to attempt."

We have very recently been involved in one of our periodic punitive or raiding excursions into Waziristan.

"To Moderate the Ardour" of Sir Henry Fowler.

It was immediately before the first of these foolish excursions, engineered by the original "Liberal Imperialist," Sir Henry Fowler, that the Punjab Government did its last service to peace on the frontier. All the civilian members of the Viceroy's Council, Sir Charles Pritchard, Sir Antony Macdonnell, and Sir James Westland, protested againt the Fowler War, but their hands would have been nerveless but for the high authority and experience of the Punjab Government. These very distinguished men, all of them of over thirty years' service in India, the very flower of the Indian Civil Service, put it on record in their Minute of Protest that—

"It is evident that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab does not anticipate any great difficulties *if our establishments are kept within our present frontier line*, and if, at the same time, due precautions are taken to prevent the provocation of collisions with

the tribesmen and to moderate the ardour of those of our civil and military officers *who are eager for an advance.*"

A Sturdy Scot and "Lèse Majesté."

The "Imperialist" Party in Simla have not forgiven the fact that events proved that the then Lieutenant-Governor was right and, though Lord Curzon has withdrawn the outlying garrisons, he has, with that strange contrariness, frequently found in clever but weak men, permanently thrown out of doors the great knowledge and experience of the Chief of the Punjab Administration. "I, George Curzon, am much the wisest person in the world on frontier affairs and am only irritated by the conceited ideas of the Punjab people regarding their superior experience. I'll just clear them out and see that my successors are not worried by civilian interference. The idea that the opinion of a mere Lieutenant-Governor—some individual without any Foreign Office culture, should have any weight in high politics is clearly intolerable." To make things smoother and to show how superior "Imperialist" good manners are, the whole of the correspondence with the India Office on the subject of the new Frontier Province was carried to a conclusion without the Lieutenant-Governor being once consulted. This high official, a sturdy Scot, a long-headed loyal servant of the Crown, protested vigorously against the discourteous exclusion of himself and successors from a field of action peculiarly theirs, and was promptly told, with the minimum of civility, that it was impossible for the Viceroy to breathe the same air as such a rebel and, if he did not keep silent,

it would be necessary to turn him and his Government out of Simla to some minor hill station, where he might in loneliness reflect on his presumption. It is a wonder he was not sent down to the plains to frizzle into humility. One awful crime is known in Europe —to breathe a word against Kaiser Wilhelm's fancies. A deeper guilt is possible to India. To have a doubt of Lord Curzon's wisdom is a blacker *lèse majesté.* The Lieutenant-Governor retired and some very senior civilians resigned, and we have had two petty frontier wars since and much waste of treasure, carefully kept out of sight.

THE PUNISHMENT OF HONEST ADVICE —A WRONG TO INDIA

THE question of coolie labour in tea gardens in Assam is a complex one, which it would be impossible to discuss in detail in these pages. I need only state here that, soon after this industry began its prosperous career, the Indian Government, under mercantile pressure, was so unwise as to help it by means of a special Act, which enables the planter to obtain labourers at fixed wages for a term of years, under a registered indenture, the breach of which is punishable by the criminal law. The question of the sufficiency of these wages has recently become urgent. I am again glad to recognise that Lord Curzon's humanity, which is a quality of heart that he possesses in a high degree, ranged him on the right side in the controversy. He fully recognised that, whilst the price of food had, according to the statistics carefully prepared by Government, advanced 44 per cent., the wages of the tea coolies had been stationary for a quarter of a century and are at the present moment practically starvation payment. He sanctioned the necessary corrective legislation, but—there is often a feeble "but" where Lord Curzon is concerned—he suggested an "amendment to the effect

A Feeble "But."

that the operation of the wage clause of the Bill should, for special reasons, namely, the present condition of the industry, be postponed for two years," which, "in practice will mean that the enhancement will not commence to take effect until the close of the third year from now," in fact, till his own term of office as Viceroy has expired. At best this is cruel kindness. The knife must be applied to the tea industry. Although originally one of the soundest branches of Indian commerce and still excellently managed in most parts, it is being well-nigh ruined by over-production. As the result of many years of prosperity, of high prices and low wages, new gardens have been planted and old gardens extended with utter recklessness and even now some million pounds of tea are being annually added to the already excessive output. Many gardens have been kept going simply because the rate of wages is so extremely low.

"Practically Selling these People."

I do not intend to elaborate this subject. I merely ask attention to the fact that, in the year 1902, it was found necessary to pass legislation, of which, in the words of Sir Charles Rivaz, K.C.S.I., Member of the Viceroy's Council, a singularly capable man, the least likely to exaggerate the facts, "the main object was to remedy the abuses and malpractices, which have sprung up in connection with the system of assisted emigration to the labour districts of Assam." "The consequence was that a horde of unlicenced and uncontrolled labour-purveyors and recruiters sprang into existence who, under the guise of assisting 'free emigration,' made large illicit gains by inducing, under false pretences,

ignorant men and women, chiefly in the most backward districts of Bengal and the Central Provinces, to allow themselves to be conveyed to Assam, and by practically selling these people to the planters for the purpose of being placed under labour-contracts in that province." This long sentence might be summarised in three words, "State-organised slavery."

The parent of the new legislation for improving wages was Sir Henry Cotton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. He gladly gave recognition to the great improvement in tea management in his province. There is no repetition of the painful charges of ill-usage, including flogging, made by Sir John Edgar in 1875. He found "the managers of gardens humane and kindly-hearted gentlemen," but the supposed exigencies of manufacture had kept wages at a dangerously low rate. The *Pioneer* admitted that "the strongest argument in favour of his views, which is brought forward by Mr. Cotton, is the mortality among Act-labourers. Though a good deal better than that shown by the decennial average, the death-rate in 1900 was 43·5, which is, he says, not only much higher than that among the general population, but compares unfavourably with the death-rate among non-Act coolies, 26·2 per 1,000."

A Cruel Mortality.

Sir Henry Cotton showed how the tea planters were cutting their own throats, the coolies they were able to obtain being "the very scum and riff-raff of the labour market." No one can doubt but that higher wages would buy a stronger, healthier, and more effective labour force.

A Bad, Bad Thing.

How has Lord Curzon treated Sir Henry Cotton? With his habitual weakness. The tea industry is the most powerful in Bengal, and it made the Calcutta journals ring with denunciations of the Chief Commissioner. This gentleman had spent nearly thirty years of his service in that province, and held in it the highest offices next to the Lieutenant-Governorship, being for six years Chief Secretary and Member of Council. His great abilities, as well as his intimate acquaintance with Bengal, added to an exceptional popularity, marked him out as the next Lieutenant-Governor. Lord Curzon knighted him and let him retire on the expiry of his term of service. In fact, the important office of Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was kept vacant for several weeks after the deeply-lamented death of Sir John Woodburn, and his successor, a gentleman who had not served one day in Bengal, was not appointed till two days after the retirement of Sir Henry Cotton had been gazetted. As in the case of Mr. Smeaton and Burmah, to use the words of the *Pioneer*, the transaction "is apt to raise doubts whether fair play, the public interest, and the opinion of the province chiefly concerned have been given due weight." Jingo organs may wax eloquent over Lord Curzon's strength, but we Anglo-Indians know him better. He collapsed before a commercial outcry just as he climbed down when the educated Indians made it clear that they would not have his education "reforms" at any price. He has been in the one case weak and wrong as in the other he was weak and right, the want of backbone being the dominating feature of both policies. It

only remains again to observe that it is a bad, bad thing, but a grievous fact that only a very rare official in India can hope for high promotion, unless he is blessed with official blindness—in fact, unless he is a "safe man" without zeal and without convictions.

THE UPROOTING OF HONEST DEALING —A WRONG TO ENGLAND

Impossible in Any Free Country.

HAVING done the wrong thing on both the western and eastern frontiers, in the Punjab and in Assam, one might hope that a kindly fate would save Lord Curzon from error in Southern India. The virus of "Imperialism" does not so readily let its victim rest. In Madras the Viceroy has placed upon the statute book an absolutely unjust Water Cess Act, which has deeply offended that province and which would be impossible in any free country. When the new law was still a Bill under discussion in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Mr. G. Vencataratnam made the following remarks, which suffice to shortly introduce the facts :—

A Really Honest System.

"Under the existing law," he said, "Government stands only in the position of an Irrigation Company. Government supplies water for irrigation only to those who apply for it. Water is sold by the acre irrigated, and the only principle recognised for charging differential rates is, that the value of lands of different classes would be affected in different degrees, according as they are capable or not of bearing sugar-cane, rice,

garden stuffs, and the more valuable kinds of crops generally. If self-interest induced the ryot to purchase water, he purchased it; otherwise not. As stated by the Hon. Mr. Grose at the Meeting of this Council, on the 22nd January, 1895, 'the rate of the water-cess is determined on the principle that a fair commercial value should be put on all water supplied.' This is the system which has been in force till now in the Godavery and Kistna Deltas." In other words, in the pre-Curzon era Government dealt absolutely honestly with its subjects and tenants. Such a state of things was clearly offensive to the "Imperialist" conscience.

"Beneficent and Profitable."

"Under the existing law, the supplier of water cannot fix the rates too high, for the demand falls as the price rises. In other words, the maximum gross income is obtained by making rates low enough to develop a good volume of traffic. Accordingly, Sir Charles Wood" (Secretary of State for India in the Ministries of the great Liberal premiers, Lords Aberdeen, Palmerston, and Russell), "laid down as one of the cardinal principles of policy 'that the water rate should be so adjusted that even the land which benefits least by the application of water will yield to the cultivator an increased profit fully sufficient to enable him to pay it.' One of the great reasons for the extensive use of canal irrigation in this country has been its cheapness, and the manner in which the price of the water has been adjusted to the crops grown. Under a system of voluntary sale, the interests of the supplier and of the purchasers of water

are identical. The system has produced excellent results in practical working and the Hon. Mr. Alfred Deakin truly says, that 'taking all things into consideration, it may be questioned if there is a more beneficent or more profitable public work *in the world*' than the Godavery Irrigation System."

This was certainly a condition of affairs that most men would hesitate about setting out to uproot. That was not the view that commended itself to our "restless upsetter of things long established." It was, however, necessary to find a fulcrum for the crowbar of the political dismantler. It was, therefore, discovered that there was a certain amount of leakage and percolation in the irrigation system, and that lands, which did not pay cess gained some advantage from the moisture. On the other hand, it is alleged that ill-made channels often water-logged lands that were low lying and even flooded them in the rainy season. As usual Government initiated new legislation, which is described as follows by Mr. G. Vencataratnam:—

Dismantling.

"The old system was very simple in practice and easily understood. Now we are asked to abandon this self-acting system in favour of one, which removes us from the region of fact into that of speculation. The first change proposed is, that Government shall be empowered to levy *any* water-rate it thinks fit (!), under such rules as it may prescribe, alter or amend from time to time, whenever water, by direct or indirect flow or by percolation or drainage, from any river, stream, channel, tank, or work belonging to, or constructed by

Fears Our Own Courts of Justice.

Government, from or through adjoining lands, or otherwise, irrigates any land under cultivation and such irrigation is beneficial to and sufficient for the requirements of the crop on such land. The second change is, that the opinion of the Collector shall be final on the point whether such irrigation is beneficial to and sufficient for the requirements of the crop; that he shall be the *sole interpreter* of the rules under which he professes to act (!!); and that his inquiry shall not be a judicial proceeding. The third change is, that the Civil Courts shall be *divested of jurisdiction* (!!!) to question any assessment made by the Collector under the Act." Now that is a pretty dish to set before an unrepresented taxpayer. It is manifest that the third of these provisions is such that none but a reactionary Viceroy would sanction. If a London Water Company suggested such a policy even the *Times* might be trusted to say that it was playing the game rather low down.

"High Prices" and "Extortion."

"The option of refusing irrigation has been the only safeguard open to the cultivator against any injustice or inequality in the imposition of water-rates—which rates it is left to the supplier of water to fix at his pleasure. When you give power to the supplier of water to charge any rate on any land according to his own view of the benefit caused by such water, without regard to the volition of the cultivator, it may be imagined what the consequences of such a drastic change will be. The supplier can enforce his own rates. It will no longer be to his interest to get cultivators to take water for irrigating a great many acres, but to

get a maximum price for a few acres. His policy will be one of high prices rather than large sales. You will place the cultivators absolutely at the mercy of the supplier. Water will no longer be an article, which the cultivator may or may not purchase, according as it benefits his land or not. In short, the price paid for water will be converted into a tax or forced contribution, just like income-tax. Every land-holder who has the misfortune of owning land in the vicinity of an irrigation channel or of a drain—natural or artificial—will be completely at the mercy of the village officers, Revenue Inspectors, and Delta Superintendents, who will have large opportunities for extortion," and no court of justice can do him justice. A system, that has admittedly been a blessing, whilst conducted on the free contract principle, is now viewed with dread by a numerous body of land-holders, who can obtain no redress from the courts of law. There is nothing more urgently needed than a scientific water supply in a country so often stricken by drought as India is, but "Imperialist" wisdom, lost in dreams of "broadening the basis of taxation," makes irrigation hateful to the very persons, who ought to be most interested in its success, as a preliminary to its extension.

The Encroachments of the Tax-Gatherer.

The important fact is that there is no limit to the encroachments of the Government tax-gatherer on the rights of native proprietors. The Collector discovers that field B derives some moisture from an irrigated neighbour, field A, and promptly demands water-rate

from its owner, who naturally, as he has to pay for it, forthwith takes a full supply. Presto, there is a wider development. The observant and eager official is quite sure that fields C, D, and E, which, with A, bound field B, are also beneficiaries by percolation and they also are subjected to water taxation, and there is no remedy for the plundered proprietor in the courts of law. The unctuously upright "Imperialist" is no doubt horrified when the landlords of Madras smile sadly at the idea that the administration of Lord Curzon is an incarnation of justice. I would even venture to think that there is something slightly incongruous between their exclusion from the courts of law and the admirable Message of His Majesty the King-Emperor at the Delhi Durbar: "To all my subjects throughout India I renew the assurance of my regard for their liberties and of my respect for their rights."

Veiled Compulsion.

I may mention that there was an enhancement of 25 per cent. in the water cess in Madras in 1894, followed by some relinquishments of water agreements by the peasantry. Since then there has been a persistent attempt to introduce compulsion, a proceeding, which, if straightforward, might arouse attention. The end has been arrived at by a manœuvre, a subterfuge, which may commend itself to "Imperialists," but is abhorrent to the most elementary ideas of fair play. I should mention that before the water cess was increased in 1894, irrigation works in Madras had long been a first-class financial success, paying often 12 per cent. interest. The money derived from the enhanced

cess was needed not for the extension of irrigation in Southern India but for "Imperialist" outlay on the Afghan frontier, probably to start a village-burning foray into Waziristan. Your Lordship will remember that Sir Henry Fowler became Secretary of State for India on the 3rd March, 1894, and a very perfect type of the new-fangled Liberal he was. An old-fashioned Liberal may well ask whether the absence of just dealing, which the above-narrated proceedings nakedly display, is not a wrong to England as well as to India, a grievous wrong to our national character.

THE UPROOTING OF A PEASANT PROPRIETARY—REACTIONARY RECKLESSNESS

“In No Way Inferior” to the English Freeholder.

A STILL more unjustifiable inroad on the rights of native property in Bombay has signalised the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. About eighteen months ago he gave his assent to a new Amending Act, which in a couple of sections has destroyed an ancient Peasant Proprietary, the very thing we are seeking to set up in Ireland. When the Bombay Presidency passed into our hands in 1817 at the end of the Mahratta War, a British Commissioner, the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, a scion of a noble Scotch family, was appointed to report on the tenures in the conquered territories. His most important conclusion is given in these words: “A large portion of the farmers are the proprietors of their estates, subject to the payment of a *fixed* land-tax to Government.” The Collector of Poona also reported that the “Bombay cultivator is in no way inferior in point of tenure to the holder of the most undisputed freehold estate in England.” The Collector of Ahmadnagar wrote at the same time that this tenure “has existed in this part of India from time immemorial, and when I have asked

about the period of its establishment, I have been told I might as well inquire when the soil was made." Mr. Commissioner Chaplin in 1822 declared that the farmer "is, together with his heirs, entitled to hold his tenure by sale, gift, or mortgage, and, without previously obtaining the permission of the Government." We took over from the native rulers a yeomanry, who owned the fields they tilled and whose sturdiness was proved on a hundred battle-fields by the hardy soldiers, whom the conquering Peshwas led all over India. We now govern one of the most inert and famine-stricken populations in the world. It has been left to Lord Curzon, after nearly a century, during which their rights were never questioned, to destroy their immemorial position as freeholders.

Destruction of the Tenants' Rights.

Our first act was to disregard the fixed nature of the land-tax, although twenty years before we had introduced this very fixedness of revenue from land into Bengal by the great and wise law, known as the Permanent Settlement. The results, the ruinous results in Bombay of subsequent enhancements have been described in preceding pages. The heritable and transferable rights of the Bombay farmers were, however, left to them and fully recognised by the legislature. As late as 1879 the Bombay Land Revenue Code (Bombay Act V. of 1879), declared in section 73 that "the right of occupancy shall be deemed an heritable and transferable property." Act VI. of 1901 has destroyed both rights, a new section amending the earlier law laying it down that "the occupancy or

interest of the occupant in the land shall not be transferable without the previous sanction of the Collector." The land revenue official can exclude from succession a son, a purchaser, or a creditor, without assigning any reason and without his decision being called in question by a court of law. As in Madras, so in Bombay Lord Curzon seems to doubt the legality as well as the justice of his proceedings, and forearms himself by slamming the doors of the law courts in the face of the injured native proprietor.

An Emphatic Protest against Confiscation.

When this extraordinary measure of confiscation was being finally passed, a protest of the most significant kind was made. "Then followed," writes a native journal, "a scene, which will be memorable in the annals of the Legislative Council of Bombay. On the result of the voting on the motion being declared, Mr. Mehta, Sir Bhalchandra Krishna, Messrs. Parekh, Khan, and Gohkale left the Council Hall before the Bill was read a second and a third time and passed. This is the most emphatic protest which the non-official members could have entered against the extraordinary course of legislation, upon which the Bombay Government is embarked." Your Lordship will, no doubt, notice the manner in which this plundering legislation was driven through the Council at a single sitting, the Bill being read a second and a third time almost without taking breath. How Mr. Balfour must yearn for such rules of procedure! It is to the credit of the native members of the Council that they declined to take part in the unseemly performance.

The justification for these extreme measures is said to be to prevent the farms being mortgaged to money-lenders, who foreclose and become proprietors of the land. Time alone can prove how far this policy is a wise one. Native politicians hold that it is the last step in the ruin of the peasantry. The overwhelming taxation—the 55 per cent. income-tax—has for half a century driven the people to the money-lenders. It will be interesting to observe the result of cutting off this source of financial supply.

The People Driven to the Money-lender.

Still after making every allowance for the necessity of protecting the State-beggared farmers from the harpies of usury it may well be questioned whether any one but a past master in reactionary recklessness would attempt to arrive at this excellent object by a policy of wholesale uncompensated confiscation. It ought to be fairly easy to formulate legislation intended to restrict the alienation of land to money-lenders, but to your "Imperialist" the Indian, like the Kaffir, is merely a human machine, without rights, whom God has created to pay taxes, to work in gold mines, and generally to make himself financially useful to the Pushful.

I could easily add to the list of matters, in which Lord Curzon has hopelessly failed to do his duty. His scamping of the coolie question in Assam is equalled by his neglect to deal with the painful question of intoxicants, liquor and drugs, in that Province and throughout India. In Assam English tea planters have for years been on their knees begging Govern-

Drink the Mainstay of "Imperialism."

ment to remove or even supervise the excise system that is poisoning their labourers. The revenue from liquor alone in Assam has increased by 250 per cent. in the past ten years. The day a tea garden is opened a Christian Government sets up a drink shop at its gate, the liquor being made at a Government distillery and found on analysis to contain seven times more fusel oil than the worst unrectified Scotch whiskey. And so it is all over the Empire. The total excise revenue has risen from £1,755,000 in 1875 to £4,239,000 in 1901. It would be possible to maintain an entire army corps in Kabul for six months with the increased annual revenue, and this knowledge is joy to the "Imperialist" conscience. An English M.P. some years ago counted 126 men and women dead drunk on opium in a single den in Lucknow. He was a Nonconformist and rather horrified. The unreasonable man might have foreseen that the proceeds of that shop in one year probably paid for the caparisoning of a dozen State elephants at the Delhi Durbar. For, of such things is the Kingdom, the Heaven, of the "Imperialist."

I am,

Your Lordship's very humble servant,

TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS IN INDIA.